THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

Volume 8 August, 1926 Number 8

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month
THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND THE MINERS

Were the Miners Let Down?
J. R. CAMPBELL

The Miners' Struggle in the North
WILL LAWTHER

The Mosul "Victory"
W. N. EWER

Canton
COLONEL C. L. MALONE

Secret Service and the Labour Movement
HAROLD GRENFELL

The World of Labour :: Book Reviews

Published at
162 BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, LONDON, S.W. 1

PRICE SIXPENCE

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 8 AUGUST, 1926 NUMBER 8

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

CONTENTS

Notes of the Month - - - - Page 451
THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND THE MINERS

Were the Miners Let Down? - - - „ 463
By J. R. CAMPBELL

The Miners' Struggle in the North - - „ 471
By WILL LAWTHER

The Mosul "Victory" - - - „ 475
By W. N. EWER

Canton - - - - - - - - „ 484
By COLONEL C. L. MALONE

Secret Service and the Labour Movement - „ 492
By HAROLD GRENFELL

The World of Labour - - - - „ 498
Finland—Norway—Labour and Socialist International—Japan

Book Reviews - - - - - - „ 503
The Workers' Theatre - - - - - R.P.D.
The Indian Peasant through official spectacles - C.P.D.

Published at
162 Buckingham Palace Road
London
S.W.1

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices:

162 BUCKINGHAM PALACE RD., S.W.1

Telephone : SLOANE 5412.

¶ The Editor of *The Labour Monthly* invites contributions. He cannot, however, be held responsible for MSS. sent to him, or undertake to enter into correspondence regarding rejected contributions, although every endeavour will be made to return the same when a stamped and addressed envelope for that purpose is enclosed.

1926 : Reduced Subscription Rates

[PAID IN ADVANCE]

British Isles :

One year - 7/- Six months - 3/6

Abroad :

One year 8/- or $2.00 Six months 4/- or $1.00

American Subscription Representative :—Philip Novick, 2710 Sedgwick Avenue, Bronx, New York, N.Y., U.S.A.

Advertisement Rates on application.

Volume VII (January to December, 1925) is now ready and can be supplied for 10s. 6d. post free, or these numbers can be bound and returned post free for 4s. 6d.

Cases can be supplied for 3s. 6d. post free.

Title Page for Volume VII can be had on application if 1½d. for postage is sent.

A complete set of Bound Volumes can be supplied for £3 0s. 0d. post free.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES of the MONTH

The General Council's Report—Attacking the Miners—Why No Conference?—Pledge of February 26—Was It Repudiated?—Confusing the Air—The Cause of Collapse—A Worthless Defence—Summing Up—The Basic Assumption—"Wages Must Come Down"—The Political Issue—Advance or Surrender.

THE Report of the General Council on the miners' struggle and the calling off of the General Strike, which has been partially published, raises a plain issue for the whole working-class movement. The central character of the Report consists in this, that it endeavours to defend the General Council by creating a division, which should not exist and which does not exist, between the miners and the rest of the working-class movement. The miners are censured for fighting. The General Council praises itself for its surrender. Such a division is not only indefensible on grounds of barest working-class solidarity. It also shows a complete failure to understand the fight of the miners as the fight of the working class, and a complete failure of the General Council to perform its central function, namely, to go beyond thinking in terms of separate industries and think in terms of the whole working class. The General Council has only made its position worse by this defence.

WHAT is the position in England to-day? The whole policy of Capitalism is directed towards the ruthless reduction of wages and lengthening of hours for the working class as the sole means of maintaining its position. The whole working-class movement has declared, by every Conference decision, its opposition to such attack. The attack, as in each successive phase of the post-war crisis, centres on the miners. The miners, in resisting it, are fighting, not merely for themselves, but

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for the whole working class, and for the whole international working class, and they are loyally carrying out the decisions of the whole working-class movement. Nevertheless, the General Council and Labour Party leaders deliberately smashed the solidarity of the workers alongside the miners, and are to-day using all their efforts, persuasion and threats to enforce surrender on the miners. Because of this disruption of the working-class ranks, the capitalist attack is stronger than it has ever been, threatening even the rights and organisation of the Trade Unions. In this situation the Report of the General Council has neither excuse nor apology for the past, nor policy for the future. The facts are admitted. It is admitted that their pledge was broken, that they joined with the Government against the miners and that they broke the ranks when the miners stood firm. Their only defence is to attack the miners as unreasonable—because they refused to accept a reduction in wages ! This is an issue with which the working-class movement will need to deal.

IT is impossible not to note the conditions under which the Report has been issued. The Trade Union Conference to which it should have been submitted was postponed, as it was explained, for the sake of the miners' struggle, so that no appearance of disunity should come out. According to the statement, the object was " that a united policy may be adopted to resist to the fullest possible extent the Government action." It was regarded as " of the greatest importance at this juncture that all sections and parties should avoid statements either in speech or writing which create friction or misunderstanding, and divert attention from the purpose in view." The miners' leaders themselves, with a trustfulness which recent experience should not have warranted, subscribed to this, and bound their own mouths not to repeat the plain truths they had to say of critical importance to the working class. This apparent devotion to the miners' struggle (a devotion less conspicuous in fact, since the same Union leaders were freely allowing blackleg coal to be transported) was in the forefront so long as it was a question of facing a critical Conference which would have been able to deal with statements made. But as soon as the objective was achieved of postponing the Conference and silencing

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the miners' representatives, then there quickly comes out—informally, in a hole-and-corner fashion, without either official sanction or official disapproval—the Report of the General Council, which turns out to be an open, shameless attack on the miners, issued in the midst of their struggle, and repeating the lowest, calumniating propaganda of the *Daily Mail* and *Morning Post* type about miners receiving £13 a week, &c. In this way, after all the talk of unity and solidarity, the miners receive another stab in the back from the General Council without a sign of protest from a single member.

THE Report (in so far as the Bromley version issued is correct—the "unofficial" publication may no doubt give the opportunity of changes) contains a number of misleading statements, similar to that on the high wages of miners or the supposed effect of the miners' terms to mean the throwing of 300,000 miners out of employment, which do not require further comment for the moment. But the one central theme of the whole Report, the pivot on which the whole argument turns, is the plea that the miners ought to have been ready to accept a reduction in wages. It is claimed that the famous Pledge of February 26, by which the General Council pledged itself to "no reduction of wages" for the miners, and which the General Council broke, no longer held good because the appearance of the Commission's Report "had very materially changed the situation" and "to continue with mere slogans would have been silly." The Pledge is apparently not even mentioned, but only the situation as it was after the Commission, when the General Council had already secretly gone back on the miners. The fact is divulged that already by the beginning of April they had refused to accept the miners' terms—no reduction of wages, no increase of hours and no district settlements—which were an exact replica of the Pledge of February 26 and therefore exactly corresponded to the public position of the whole movement. Any going back on this, which in fact simply reproduced the position of last July and of the Scarborough Congress, was an act of the General Council without mandate, which should have been plainly stated and submitted to the Conference; and failing this, *the miners alone represented, and to-day*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

represent, the publicly decided position of the whole working-class movement. It is not a question of a difference between the General Council and the miners, but between the General Council and the working-class movement.

THIS secret surrender before the fight, which had already been completely accomplished by the beginning of April, and registered in the secret letter of the General Council to the miners on April 8, was never divulged to the Conference, and is only now wrung out into publicity two months after the event, when the work of treason has been done. Why was the General Council's letter of April 8 not divulged to the Conference ? Was it because it was considered not important for the Conference to know that the General Council did not accept the miners' terms ? Or was it because the General Council knew that if anyone had dared to suggest opposition to the miners' terms he would have been instantly repudiated ; and therefore they preferred to keep their counsel to themselves, basking meanwhile in the applause of the Conference and mouthing sentiments about fighting and sacrificing to the last drop? Nevertheless this shameless secret surrender, which is only revealed now, is actually brought out as the whole basis of the defence, when it is in reality one of the strongest pieces of accusation. On the strength of this the Council declares that the General Strike began—

> not on the formula of the miners, which had been definitely rejected by the Industrial Committee, but on the decision of the conference of executives to support the miners against having to accept reductions of wages before negotiations on the rest of the Commission's Report.

This is playing with the facts. The miners' formula had never been " definitely rejected " by the Conference, which was the responsible body : on the contrary, it was implicitly accepted by the Pledge of February 26, which was never publicly repudiated, and was therefore universally understood by the movement to represent the Council's policy and the basis on which the General Strike was fought. No secret rejection by a sub-committee could make a difference to this.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IT is true that the miners' leaders made a mistake, having once received the letter of April 8, in not bringing it before the Conference and getting a clear decision on the issue. Immediate publicity would have scotched the traitors' plans. Had the issue been plainly brought before the Conference, there is no question what the decision would have been. It was not sufficient to make an incidental declaration of policy in a speech ("reserving our revolvers"), and a statement as if affecting only the miners; it was necessary to secure a clear decision, and a decision of the whole working-class movement. Here is seen the old fallacy of endeavouring to cover up treachery in the supposed interests of unity, in the belief that, if only treachery is concealed and an appearance of unity maintained, no harm will be done. The exact contrary is the case. Fresh air is essential to the health of the working-class movement. Not the exposure of treachery, but the concealment of it, does the harm; unity is broken, not by dealing with treachery and the plain decision of issues, but by failing to deal with it and leaving issues unclear. The costly experience of the General Strike has driven this lesson home. The fog and ambiguity in which every issue is dealt with in the British Labour Movement is not practical caution and statesmanship; it is simply the cover of treachery, by which everything is intended to mean one thing for the working-class movement, who desire plain issues and a plain fight, and another thing for the opportunist leaders, who intend to "fix it up" subsequently with the Government or the employers. This was the case with the General Strike, where the workers believed they were fighting to prevent a reduction of the wages of the miners, whereas the leaders from the start never intended any such thing. The only way to prevent this is by much stronger and clearer fighting on the part of the left wing elements, who must know where they stand and be prepared to stand for it, not only in speeches and generalities, but in conference, in committees, in resolutions and in action. Otherwise the misleading fog of unanimity only plays into the hands of the skilful and versatile agents of the government (politely termed Right Wing). The error of the miners' leaders, however, in failing to bring the issue, once they knew it, straight to the Conference and getting it settled, was at the worst an error of judgment, of over-trustfulness. The crime of treachery was the Council's.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TAKING advantage of this ambiguity in the actual policy —an ambiguity that was never intended by the ordinary Conference delegate, who trustfully and enthusiastically voted the strike resolution, to conflict with or cancel out the Pledge of February 26 or in any way represent opposition to the miners' policy—the Council, from the moment of its voting, went completely against the spirit of the Conference, and, in place of a united front with the miners, acted as the agents of the Government to bring pressure on the miners to accept a reduction of wages. To-day for their defence they actually attack the miners for refusing to accept a reduction. They declare that such a policy is "puerile," "silly," "not leadership"; that the miners must have known that a reduction in wages must precede re-organisation, and so forth. Their one pre-occupation during the strike, which by their own statement was never intended to have been fought by them at all, but was only forced by the Government's ultimatum, was, not to win the fight, but to force the miners to give way. From the outset they determined that it was impossible to win the fight against the Government: that of the two alternatives, capitulation of the Government or termination by attrition, the first was out of the question owing to the resources of the Government, and the second would have meant the disorganisation of the trade union movement; and, therefore, they concentrated all their efforts on the submission of the miners, acting secretly in the midst of the battle, not as leaders of the workers' fight, but as go-betweens for the Government with the miners. When all their efforts either to force or bamboozle the miners failed, they finally broke with the miners and surrendered without terms (the threadbare pretence that the Samuel Memorandum represented "terms" is finally abandoned in the Report, thus giving the lie direct to a dozen prominent individual members of the General Council) and disrupted the workers' ranks. The Report attributes the sole cause of this collapse, not to any objective conditions, not to any weakening of the front (this point may be recommended to the attention of Otto Bauer and his colleagues), but solely to the miners and their refusal to surrender.

> The strike was terminated for one sufficient reason only—namely, that in view of the attitude of the Miners' Federation its continuance would have rendered its purpose futile.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

By " attitude of the Miners' Federation " is meant their refusal to accept a reduction in wages, the position to which the whole movement was pledged.

AS a defence this is so thin that it is not worth exposure. It may be pointed out that a pledge, once given, normally remains a pledge, at least until explicitly repudiated ; and that, once broken, abuse of another party for remaining loyal to it is irrelevant. The Pledge of February 26, which was no formal question, but an explicit declaration on the most vital immediate question of working-class policy, was never openly repudiated ; but on the contrary, according to the *Daily Herald*, was actually reaffirmed on April 30. The whole working-class movement believed that the pledge was still binding when they entered the strike, that that pledge was the basis on which the fight was being fought, that there was absolute unanimity between the movement and the miners on the basis of the miners' terms. The General Council knew that to have made the slightest suggestion to the contrary, to have given a hint of opposition to the miners of repudiation of their pledge, would have raised a storm ; and, therefore, through the whole of the Conference of May 1 they never did so, and never stated honestly what was in their minds. Of all the secret diplomacy that these labour politicians pretend to attack in capitalist foreign politics, there was never such shameful secret diplomacy as this inside the working-class movement ; because this was not secret diplomacy in order to keep the enemy uninformed ; on the contrary, they told the Government readily enough before the fight their intention to break with the miners, and so strengthened the Government's hands by the certainty of future surrender ; but it was their own working-class movement that they were afraid to tell. It is true that any skilled observer, knowing their habits and reading between the lines of the speeches at the Hypocrites' Conference on May 1, could easily see at the time what was afoot ; but the workers had neither leisure nor practice to read between the lines in the game of formulas, nor did they then know that they had to deal with cardsharpers. The only moral of this casuistical plea of the General Council to claim that they were not bound by their manifest obligations would appear to

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be—a moral which the workers will certainly learn for the future—that, in dealing with these rogues, it is wise not to accept vague formulas and generalities uncritically in a general spirit of solidarity and good humour, as has been the habit in the movement, but to get things down in black and white—and then not to trust them. This is the lesson which the Council is apparently anxious to teach the workers. But on all the wider issues of the struggle there is not only no defence ; the defence directly admits every worst charge that has been brought against the Council.

WHAT is the root of the position ? The heaviest struggle between Capitalism and the working class is gathering over a period of nine months with a warning set as clearly as a clock. The Government's preparations are as open as they are complete. The General Council refuses to prepare, and diplomatically "ignores" the Government's preparations. The hour of crisis approaches ; the whole working-class movement declares for unity with the miners, on whom the attack has centred, and for common resistance to a common attack on the whole working class. The General Council intrigues secretly with the Government against the miners, exerts pressure on the miners to accept the Government's terms, offers the Government secretly—without informing the miners—to give up the miners' position and to call off the common working-class struggle which has been entrusted to their leadership. The Government, being determined on the struggle, and knowing that the offers of the General Council do not represent either the miners or the working-class movement, forces an ultimatum on a pretext, and then hastily cuts off communications in order not to receive the General Council's white flag : the struggle begins ; the Government throws the whole force of the State, strike-breaking machinery, police, military, special recruiting, &c., into the field. The General Council refuses to mobilise the full strength of the working class, does everything to damp down the working-class fight, refuses international support and conceals the Government's prevention of it, denies that there is any struggle with the Government ; meanwhile intrigues secretly with Government agents on a basis of surrender, and finally, when the workers' solidarity and fighting

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spirit is at its height, surrenders unconditionally, abandoning without protection or guarantee both the locked-out miners and the other workers in the fight. The position of the working class is only saved from complete rout, first by the miners holding on, and second by the other workers refusing to come back immediately on the surrender without guarantees and thus checking the full employers' offensive that was intended. Thereupon the General Council, which is now sanctioning blackleg coal, comes out for its defence with an attack on the miners for sticking to the fight.

BEHIND all this policy of the General Council lies one basic assumption, common to Baldwin and to the General Council, the assumption that Wages Must Come Down. This is the pivot of their policy, the whole burden of their attack on the miners. The miners' policy of resisting wage-reductions (which rankled all the more because, as Bromley informed Cook, the other Union leaders had accepted wage-reductions for their men, therefore why should not the miners do the same ?) is attacked and condemned as " silly," " puerile," " no leadership," " starving on a slogan." This is the exact language of the Capitalist Press. There is not thought of turning the attack on royalties, on profits, on a genuine fight for nationalisation. No, the one thought, common to Baldwin, the Samuel Commission and the General Council, is that Wages Must Come Down. This is the very thinking of Capitalism, and the General Council is its prisoner. The words of Cook will be remembered :—

> I have had experience of being bullied in colliery offices ; I had experience in 1920 and 1921 in meeting the Government ; but never have we been bullied by the employers or the Government to the extent that we were bullied by certain Trade Union leaders to accept a reduction of wages. (" Shame.") The Government knew that and the coalowners knew it. One man on the other side said to me : " The Trade Union Council will help us," and the Prime Minister on more than one occasion publicly thanked the Trade Union Council.

But the same thing is going on to-day : and it is possible for the governmental organ, *The Times*, to declare complacently in its issue of July 15 :—

> As long as the miners, to use the words of the General Council, are prepared to face starvation for a " slogan," Labour Members of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Parliament realise that little can be done, but there is a growing feeling that, properly handled, the miners would not now prove quite so adamant as they were in the early days of the dispute.

Stripped of its language, this means that these Labour leaders count on starvation to break the miners. It is a pretty pass when workers' leaders can look for such weapons to bring down their fellow-workers before the capitalists.

THERE was a time when the Reformists used to claim to stand for positive gains, for wages, for bread and butter, against the visionary schemes and dreams, the theories and doctrines of the Revolutionaries. That day is past. To-day the banner of the Reformists is the Reduction of Wages. The fight for wages, the fight for bread and butter, is now declared by them to be "negative," a "theory," "doctrinaire," a mere "slogan." It is the Revolutionaries who are leading the wage-struggle, who are showing the way forward for the wage-struggle, at the same time as the way forward for the ultimate struggle. With this change a whole epoch has changed, and the leadership of the working-class movement will inevitably change. The banner of the Reformists has become the Reduction of Wages (and, therefore, hostility to, and disruption of, the working-class struggle), because the banner of Capitalism has become the Reduction of Wages; and the Reformists must, willingly or unwillingly, walk the path with Capitalism. The General Council has not made the Reduction of Wages the centre of its policy because it likes it, but because it must; and it must, because it dare not face the alternative. The Reduction of Wages is not "economically necessary." On the contrary, Nationalisation which genuinely wiped out all capitalist profits and royalties and unified the industry on the lines that have been a thousand times pointed out could pay, not only existing wages, but higher wages, and still retain all the men at present in the industry. But the General Council dare not touch this because it would be "political." Nationalisation? That is a question for Parliament, "when Labour has a majority," &c. And meanwhile? Meanwhile, royalties, interest and dividends are sacred and must not be menaced: what else is "the Constitution" for? Therefore, Wages Must Come Down: this is

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the only "economic," *i.e.*, capitalist, solution. So we get the monstrous picture of this General Council, set up to lead the workers' fight, these workers' leaders, these so-called socialists, using their position and their power to force down their fellow-workers, demanding, and demanding aggressively, with "bullying," that the miners on starvation wages must yield up 10 per cent. in order that the Duke of Northumberland may continue to receive his £75,000 a year. This is the practical position of the General Council, the position of Reformist Socialism in the period of capitalist decline. It is the inevitable position, the reality, of all "Constructive" Socialism, "Evolutionary" Socialism, MacDonald Socialism, Second International Socialism, when the mist of phrases and aspirations is translated into the experience of hard facts. And, therefore, the workers will have to look elsewhere for the leadership of their struggles.

THE General Council failed because they dared not face the political issues inevitably raised by the modern Trade Union struggle. As soon as the Government becomes involved, they run away "out of respect for the Constitution." They declare in effect—it is the whole burden of their Report—that it is impossible to meet the forces of the Government. If this were true, there would be no possibility of further working-class struggle, since every large-scale struggle in the modern period is a struggle with the forces of the Government and the State, and will be more and more so. The policy of the General Council is therefore a policy of surrender, not once, but always for the future. It is a policy of abdication, a declaration that Trade Unionism can go no further. Hence the General Council inevitably stands for a policy of wage-reductions : it can no other. The workers, however, have no intention of accepting wage-reductions, and will fight them, even against the Government, if necessary. Hence the working-class struggle will inevitably go on, even in spite of these leaders, and it will go on against the Government and the State, and will find the necessary means, and the leadership that is prepared to fight. The alternatives between wage-reduction and surrender or else struggle with the State are so clear that there can be no question of the answer.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MORE than this. It is sometimes stated as if the struggle with the State arises only because the State enters into the fight on behalf of large-scale capitalism, but that the character of the struggle will remain the old wage-struggle. This is a dangerously limited view, which would paralyse effective facing of the period in front. The struggle with the State develops, not only because the State places itself at the head of large industry, but also because the wage-issue to-day cannot be fought within the old bounds, but inevitably raises political issues more and more clearly, issues of reorganisation, of nationalisation, of encroachment on capitalist ownership as the only alternative to wage-reductions. Therefore the struggle with the State increasingly develops over political issues. But political issues inevitably raise more and more sharply the issue of power. The whole line of development of Trade Unionism leads straight to this in the present period, and the sooner this is clearly recognised the better. The development of the struggle takes place over a succession of crises, which do not necessarily raise ultimate issues at a stroke ; but the line of development is clear, and the failure to recognise this line at any point means inevitably the path of surrender, the path of the General Council, the failure to conduct even the daily struggle. This is the supreme lesson which the whole Trade Union movement must learn. The essential character of the future period is the struggle with the State, which begins in a limited form, but inevitably enlarges its character. The leadership of the future will have to face this and the consequent tasks, or fail. The General Council leadership, which refuses to face this, and declares instead that Trade Unionism can go no further and must henceforth only surrender, has thereby signed its own abdication.

R. P. D.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WERE THE MINERS LET DOWN?

By J. R. CAMPBELL

THE publication, by Mr. John Bromley, in the *Locomotive Journal* of extracts from the report which was to have been presented by the General Council to the meeting of Trade Union Executives called for June 25, has at last given the working class an opportunity of examining the reasons for the conduct of the General Council during the recent General Strike.

The extracts from the report of the General Council, in the article in question, are mixed up with rhetorical and, in some cases, hysterical interpolations emanating from Mr. Bromley himself. Some of these interpolations have been seized upon by the Capitalist Press as representing the considered opinion of the General Council, an action against which the General Council may have protested by the time this article appears in print.

In examining the General Council's case we have gone over the article exceedingly carefully, have excluded anything which might be regarded as an interpolation by Mr. Bromley, have endeavoured to give the General Council the benefit of the doubt in every doubtful instance, and yet the only result is that in considering the bare quotations from the Report itself we are led to the conclusion that the General Council's apology constitutes the most damning indictment of a leadership in the history of the Trade Union Movement of this country.

In order to approach the discussion in a realistic way, it is necessary to ask ourselves what is behind the attack on miners' wages and hours. Is this attack due to the fact that the mining industry, owing to bad management and to circumstances over which it had no control, got into a difficult position, while the rest of British Industry is moving along in a perfectly satisfactory fashion?

In other words, is the crisis which provoked the attack on miners' wages a mining industry crisis, or a crisis in British Capitalism?

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Any intelligent worker will agree that what we are faced with at the present moment is a crisis in British Capitalism; that not only in the mining industry, but in the basic industries of the country also, there is a condition of absolute stagnation.

Out of this stagnation the employers only see one way, "The wages of all workers must come down." We need not remind the readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY that the mining employers attacked the miners' wages in the summer of 1925 at a time when the wages of the workers in the metal and cotton industries and on the railways were also being challenged. The victory of "Red Friday" stopped the capitalist offensive elsewhere except for the slight worsening of conditions forced upon the railwaymen, but no one with any intelligence could possibly doubt that if the miners go down in the present struggle the wages of all other workers will be attacked also.

It is shameful to be forced to occupy the space of the LABOUR MONTHLY in stressing this elementary fact. We do it not for the benefit of the rank and file who have grasped it long ago, but for the benefit of the General Council who had not apparently grasped it during the period of the General Strike. The whole case of the General Council in its Report to the Conference of Executives is based on the assumption that the workers in other unions who supported the miners were merely nobly and self-sacrificingly engaging in sympathetic action on behalf of the miners, whereas the truth of the matter is that they were engaged in resisting a mass attack of the capitalists directed not merely against the miners but against themselves.

This offensive of the capitalists was prepared openly under the noses of the Trade Union leadership. The recruitment of the O.M.S. and of special constabulary, the establishment of emergency strike-breaking machinery, were all undertaken in the open, and ought to have convinced the dullest individual that the Government was preparing to back the employers in a mass attack upon the working class. No one will dispute that the O.M.S. and the emergency preparations generally were weapons of the capitalists against the workers. What the General Council has not yet grasped is that the Coal Commission were equally a weapon of the offensive against the working class. Unless we believe that the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

present Government is composed of madmen, it is impossible to conceive of them at one and the same time setting up emergency machinery to be used against the workers and setting up a Coal Commission to be used against the employers. Obviously, the Coal Commission, as its wholly capitalist composition showed, was a weapon of the capitalist offensive.

The case against the General Council is that it refused to prepare against the O.M.S. strike-breaking weapon of the Government, and that it absolutely succumbed to the Coal Commission strike-breaking weapon of the Government. In all the months between the granting of the subsidy and the issue of the Coal Commission Report, the General Council refused to elaborate any consistent wage policy to be pursued in relation to the mining dispute. The reason for this was obvious. Nothing that the Coal Commission could do could alter the basic facts of the mining industry, namely that present wages could not be paid without either the adoption of a drastic system of nationalisation and unification without compensation, or by a continuation of the subsidy. Both of these methods of retaining mining wages were ignored because both of them involved a challenge to the normal principles on which capitalist industry is carried on, and involved preparation to bring pressure to bear on the Government.

The result of their refusal to adopt a consistent wage policy was that the General Council simply drifted along, hoping that the Report of the Coal Commission which the Government intended to use as a weapon against the miners would in some miraculous way turn out to be a weapon directed against the mineowners and the capitalist offensive.

The development of this policy is clearly outlined in the General Council's document. On February 26, the Industrial Committee of the T.U.C. made a declaration in favour of no reductions in wages, no increase in hours and no interference with the principle of national agreements in the mining industry. On March 10, the Coal Commission issued its report which proved to be, as all intelligent rank and file workers expected it to be, a weapon directed against the miners and the working class. The General Council, afraid to enter into a struggle, persuaded themselves that this report was of value to the miners and their whole

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

policy from the issue of the Report was one of forcing its acceptance upon the miners' leaders.

On April 8, the miners asked the Industrial Committee of the General Council to give again a declaration in favour of no reductions in wages, no increase in hours, and national agreements. The Industrial Committee refused to do so. In conveying its decision to A. J. Cook in a letter of April 8, Mr. Citrine said that the Industrial Committee was "of the opinion that matters have not yet reached a stage when any final declaration of the General Council's policy can be made."

Here we have a piquant situation. The Government grants a subsidy to enable preparations to be made to defeat the miners as a preliminary to defeating the working class. It appoints a Coal Commission which presents a Report that will facilitate the defeat of the workers. The General Council accepts this defeatist Report and lines up with the Government of the capitalist class in endeavouring to force its acceptance on the miners! Only one thing prevented the success of this project, and that was that the mineowners' demands went far beyond the demands for reductions in wages in the Commission's Report, and forced the General Council for the time being to make a gesture on behalf of the miners. In making the gesture of solidarity by calling the General Strike on May 1, the General Council was endeavouring to bluff the Government. Bluff may sometimes justify itself in industrial warfare, but only upon the condition that those who are bluffing do not give the game away beforehand. The General Council had shown during the interval between May 1 and May 3 that it was prepared to force reductions in wages on the miners.

It made this attitude quite clear to the Government in accepting from Mr. Baldwin on May 2, the formula which it considered to be worthy of acceptance by the miners. The formula read as follows:—

> The Prime Minister has satisfied himself that as a result of conversations he had with representatives of the T.U.C., if negotiations are continued, it being understood that the notices cease to be operative, the representatives of the T.U.C. are confident that a settlement could be reached along the lines of the Report within a fortnight.

Obviously, the most cowardly Capitalist Government that ever existed would be strengthened in its determination to fight the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

workers by the spectacle of the leaders on the workers' side absolutely running away. Thus the General Council encouraged the Government to take up a strong attitude by its open display of weakness.

The Government felt that with such leaders the whole struggle would be over in a few days, the mining dispute included, and that as a result it was worth while calling the bluff.

When the General Strike took place, it took place with this leadership having no hope of victory. Dealing with the perspectives of the strike the General Council says :—

> From the position, therefore, taken up by the Government through their ultimatum, there appeared to be only two alternatives ; the capitulation of the Government ; the disintegration of the strike by a process of attrition. It was clear that the Government would use their majority in the House and the utmost resources available to them to maintain the position they had taken up.

In other words, the General Council went through the strike with only one idea, *i.e.*, that the Government was impregnable, that nothing that the working class could do would shake its determination and therefore the strike ought to be called off at the first opportunity.

It has been freely said by its apologists since that no strike can possibly succeed which is directed against the Government. This is an idea which is hopelessly defeatist. All great struggles in our basic industries must under present conditions bring in the Government. The only way to avoid bringing the Government into an industrial dispute is either to assent to the reductions in wages imposed by the capitalists, or to conduct a fight in a sectional fashion and so produce defeat. If the workers are seriously concerned for the future, however, they will not waste their time in sectional struggles, but will bring all their forces to bear at the one moment. When this happens the Government is immediately bound to interfere and strike back. A strike is a political weapon. This only means, however, that in modern industry, any effective struggle of the working class to preserve their standards must come up against the Capitalist State, which is not the representative of the community, but is simply the principal employing-class weapon in the struggle against the workers' standards. A courageous leadership recognising this would have gone all out

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to win. The case against the General Council is that it did not develop or attempt to develop the struggle so as to bring the full forces of the workers to bear.

It is worthy of note in this connection that most of the right wing leaders on the Continent could only explain the calling off of the strike by the General Council on the basis of mass strike breaking and a mass return to work. Even the Continental Amsterdam leaders failed to discover any reason why the strike should have been called off when the workers were still solid.

With regard to the Samuel Memorandum, which the General Council accepted as a basis of settlement, the Report does not claim for the memorandum any official Government connection but merely states that it is a good basis for settlement and that if the miners had accepted it as basis for negotiations, public opinion would have forced the Government to accept it also. We do not wish to quarrel with this statement, because we believe that the Samuel Memorandum, while a bad basis of settlement for the miners and the working class, is a good basis of settlement for the capitalist class. It asks the miners to place their destiny with regard to wages and conditions in the hands of an independent chairman of a National Wages Board. In other words, it sees as the solution of the wages problem in the coal industry the appointment of a capitalist arbitrator. What would have happened to the miners' wages if they had been fools enough to accept can readily be imagined.

Were the miners correct in refusing to accept reductions in wages ? Both from their own point of view as miners, and from the point of view of the wider interests of the working class, they were undoubtedly correct. Nothing would be more likely to encourage the capitalists of other industries to attack the workers than an easy acceptance of wage cuts in an industry which has always been regarded as a stronghold of Trade Unionism.

The insistance of the miners has already ensured that any victory gained by the capitalist class is going to be ten times more costly than the granting of a subsidy would have been. Even when wage cuts are inevitable it is always good Trade Union policy to " die hard," thereby preventing the development of the offensive on a wider scale. As a matter of fact, however, wage cuts in the mining industry are not inevitable and given proper

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

support to the miners even at the present moment by means of the imposition of an embargo on coal, nationally and internationally, wage cuts could be avoided and a subsidy extracted from the capitalists for a further period.

Mr. John Bromley in presenting the Report deals with a further aspect of the matter which is well worth considering from the working-class standpoint. He says :—

> To have adopted the slogan of the miners' leaders would, on their own admission, if accepted, have meant the immediate throwing out of work of some 300,000 mine workers by the closing of uneconomic mines, which appears too awful for any Trade Union leaders to contemplate. For to many thinking people it is bound to appear more sane for some highly paid men in a disorganised industry to suffer some temporary reduction than to throw 300,000 workers and their families into destitution so that a number of men earning on the admission of Mr. Cook, the Miners' Secretary, from £5 to £13 per week may retain every penny of their present wages.

It ought to be clear to every trade unionist that Mr. Bromley and such members of the General Council as agree with him in advocating this policy are challenging the everyday principles upon which the Trade Union Movement has hitherto conducted its wage struggles. It has always been the policy of the Trade Union Movement, even in its most reformist phases, to base its demands for wages upon what the most efficient business operating in any particular industry can pay. If the less efficient businesses are not able to pay the wages, then they have either got to make themselves more efficient or go out of the job. We are reaching a sorry pass in the British Labour Movement when it is being forced to adapt its minimum wage demands to the conditions of the uneconomic firms in a given industry. What this policy means any worker can grasp. It means starvation wages for the workers, and the preservation of parasitic, inefficient firms earning what is regarded as reasonable profits, while the up-to-date firms earn profits beyond the dreams of avarice.

Surely the sane policy to be adopted, even from the ordinary Trade Union standpoint, is the miners' policy of basing the minimum wage on what the most efficient firms and coalfields can pay, while a subsidy is being paid to enable wages to be maintained pending the reorganisation of the more inefficient firms.

That, we suggest, is the way to make minimum demands, as any

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trade unionist will agree who regards Trade Unionism as an instrument for maintaining the workers' standards, and not an instrument to co-operate with the employers to secure the progressive reduction of the standards of the workers.

Since issuing its apology the General Council has sent a circular calling for assistance for the miners and pointing out that we are now in the presence of a capitalist attack on the whole working class. We hope that the General Council realises that the admission of this fact reduces the apology for its conduct in the dispute to absolute nonsense.

The one lesson that we must draw from the whole situation is the inevitability of the continuation of the capitalist offensive, and of fresh struggles on the part of the workers if they are to maintain their standards. To conduct these struggles successfully a new leadership is required. The failure of the Trade Union "left" among the leaders was the failure of men who had not thought out their problems; who did not understand the nature of the situation they were facing, nor the methods which the working class would have to adopt to meet that situation. They were weak compared with the right wing, because the right wing in the person of Mr. Thomas has at least a policy—although it is one of treachery to the working class—and the ability to consistently pursue that policy through all its phases in a changing situation. Mr. Thomas knows his mind perfectly. The left-wing did not know their minds at all. The greatest lesson of the General Strike, therefore, is the need for a new leadership, who will study the complex problems arising out of the situation of British Capitalism, who will face temporary unpopularity and abuse in order to equip the British Labour Movement to face the changed situation and who in every struggle will go out to win, knowing no loyalty except loyalty to the working-class movement.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MINERS' STRUGGLE IN THE NORTH

By WILL LAWTHER

WHATEVER the readers of other magazines may think of the issues involved in this epic struggle of the miners "to keep and hold what they have won," the readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY need be under no illusions, as they have been specially favoured by articles from A. J. Cook and Herbert Smith on the principles at stake. We, therefore, intend only to give an outline of the situation from the point of view of the two exporting districts of Northumberland and Durham, as ascertained since June 29; for a few weeks prior to that we had no opportunity of reading anything or taking part in the struggle, thanks to little D.O.R.A., or rather her twin sister E.P.A.

If John Bromley had made inquiries as we have here, he would not have issued to his members (which has since been issued and broadcasted in the Press by the enemies of railwaymen and miners) the untrue statements about miners scabbing on railwaymen during the General Strike. Apparently it is a case of they "straightway began to make excuses" of others, rather than explain the reason of their own shirking.

The oldest miners here have never known the spirit that exists to-day against the latest offer of the coalowners. Old men come up after meetings and describe what the shortened working-day meant to them, and they urge the younger generation to stick it, be the end and the cost what it may. Go where you care, nothing but the most grim determination to resist exists. Despite the efforts and wealth of our opponents the North remains impregnable. Not because of any leader, but because the men realise that to submit would be a living death.

In a statement issued with the owners' terms, under the permissive Eight Hours Act, Mr. Jas. Robson, secretary of the Durham

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

County Mining Federation Board, comprising all sections in and about the Durham mines, stated on July 8 :—

> The terms on which the owners are prepared to allow work to be resumed after the 12th instant have been issued to the county, and no doubt your notice will have been drawn to them. Our duty at present is not to subject these proposals to a careful analysis *as they are so impossible*, at a glance we see they cut across all for which we have been standing for the last ten weeks, and they are precisely the same terms as were offered on April 30, 1926.
>
> Our duty is not confined to any particular district, but to the Federation as a whole. You will remember that, at a Council meeting [Comprised of one delegate from each lodge.—W.L.] we were strongly opposed to any reductions in wages, lengthening of hours, or District settlements. We have attended National Conferences and voted to maintain those conditions with the rest of the coalfields. Therefore, we assisted in determining the general policy of the Federation as a whole in the present crisis, which carries us far beyond our obligation to our own county, and makes us responsible with the rest of the men in the coalfields.
>
> As honourable men we must be loyal to our obligations and resist any District settlement and maintain the solidarity and strength of the Federation.
>
> If it were possible to conceive that anyone could be inclined to favour these proposals let them for a moment consider what they would mean to the county, and we feel sure their resolution to resist such proposals would be strengthened. We have no hesitation in saying that if such conditions were accepted they would create conditions of employment in this county that would be intolerable.
>
> In the meantime we strongly urge our people to offer the stoutest resistance possible to those offers. We have reason to believe that every possible means will be adopted to influence our members in favour of those terms, but we are confident that they will stand firm to the principle for which we have been fighting, and if a settlement is arrived at, it must be for the coalfields as a whole, and not for any district.

We have quoted this in order that those who are of faint heart, and perturbed at the resistance of the miners, should understand that it is the grim reality of the slave terms that is the urge. And this Federation Board has within its ranks all grades: enginemen, miners, cokemen, &c.

We will not quote the wages offered except to say, that it means to the hewer, or coal-getter, in Durham an advance of from two hours to one hour on his working-day and a reduction in his wage from 9s. 8d. to 8s. 7.40d., or 1s. 0.60d. per shift. We

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

point out this simple statement of fact in order that the attention of the movement may be called to the following.

While the Eight Hours Bill was travelling through its final stages, an advertisement appeared in the *Daily Herald* issued by a group of business men (?), which said that the extra hour worked in Durham would mean 6d. per ton profit on every ton of coal raised to divide out amongst the men to the extent of 5d., one penny of the 6d. going to the owner. Judge what must be the opinion of the area that has done more for the *Daily Herald* than any other, when within four days of that advertisement appearing, the offer stated above was made by the Durham owners.

If ever the need was demonstrated for a new conception of Labour tactics, when a struggle was being waged, it is surely now. After eleven weeks of the most bitter struggle that has ever been waged, when all the forces of the most merciless ruling class the world has ever seen have been brought to bear on the miners, when imprisonment has been the lot of hundreds of their fellows, we read an advertisement in Labour's only daily that the mines can only pay if we submit. Surely it is well-known that according to mineowners, the coal mines have never paid. It took the Hartley disaster in order to get two shafts to each mine, it took a six weeks' strike in 1912 to enforce a minimum wage. Every improvement has always been resisted with the parrot-cry, the mines are losing.

Some pure and simple souls (we are not going to state which quality is the larger) in our movement, argue that to refuse such an advertisement would be interfering with the liberty of the Press. That was not said when the advertisement of the Minority Movement was refused. Liberty of the Press, when we are fighting for the liberty to exist. O, Liberty, what crimes are still committed in thy name. Freedom of the Press, and a Labour Press, to which the miners have given their all, when we are fighting in the North to retain the shorter working-day that was won for this generation half-a-century ago. This new tactic is only a short second in the muddling of our friends, to put it at its lowest estimate, to the calling off of the General Strike. The necessity of the moment demands that this game, this debating of the rights and wrongs of capitalist advertisements against the miners shall cease.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No area in the country is reaping the rewards of Labour in power, and using power, more than in Durham. We have, of course, that symptom in our midst, the respectable person, but on the whole it is a correct statement of fact to state that the spirit of the adults has been kept up, by the fact that the children were being fed through the Feeding of Necessitious School-Children's Act, and by Labour Boards of Guardians. Only, it is realised that even in these two channels, attempts at clogging their efforts are made by those who pull the strings in Whitehall.

Whatever the end of this may be, the lessons as indicated here must not be left over till "next time," we cannot afford ever again to allow those who funk the fight to have control. We learn by experience what must and shall be done, and to-day is the moment we must begin to make the changes.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MOSUL "VICTORY"

By W. N. EWER

THE Angora Treaty has been duly acclaimed a triumph for a firm but pacific diplomacy. Sir Ronald Lindsay has become a G.C.M.G.. and the Foreign Secretary has gratefully welcomed the addition of some fresh leaves to the rather faded and disreputable laurels of Locarno.

Yet in cold fact the Anglo-Turkish settlement is, if not a defeat, at any rate a decided repulse for British diplomacy. To have gained the Turkish Government's recognition of the permanent annexation of the Mosul Vilayet to Iraq; to have secured at last the fixation of a dangerously disputed frontier; this is indeed something. But it is only a part of the programme. The real objectives of the negotiation lay much further than this. And there has been a complete failure to attain them.

Mosul, as I have frequently pointed out, is far more than an oil field of hypothetical value. Turkey is something far more than the neighbour state across the Hakkiari mountains. Sir Ronald Lindsay and his chiefs in London were concerned not only to establish a frontier but to establish Great Britain's position in South-Western Asia on a firm basis, to secure for British diplomacy a dominant influence from the Ægean to the Indian frontier —an influence which would at once oppose an impassable barrier to any pressure or influence from the north, and would secure for Great Britain the lion's share of the inheritance when, in the fulness of time, the remaining independent Asiatic states should collapse.

It had become gradually clear to Downing Street that the key to this position lay in Angora. Turkey, to-day, is not indeed the Turkey whose territories only a few years ago stretched from the Adriatic to the Persian Gulf, whose armies controlled the Straits and the desert routes to the East, whose frontiers lay within striking distance of the Suez Canal. But, in defiance of all the cheerful calculations of 1919, she has established herself as still a

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

power to be counted with. She is still in fact—whatever the treaties may say about it—mistress of the Straits. She still controls the Bagdad Railway. She still lies perilously near the increasingly important motor road and airway routes to the Gulf. And though she is no longer the seat of the Khilafat, her prestige in the Moslem world was never higher. You have only to walk through any bazaar in South-Western Asia or North Africa and note the portraits of Kemal in the shops to understand.

Since, then, Turkey had opposed an obstinate and successful resistance to the projects of tri-partition and dismemberment; since she had asserted, both in arms and in diplomacy, her strength and status, it was clear enough that British policy must be reversed, and that the Turkish Republic must be lured away from its dangerous friendship with Russia, must be persuaded that its real advantage lay in friendship and close co-operation with Great Britain, must—in a word—be brought into the British sphere of influence, both diplomatically and economically. If that could be achieved, Persia and Afghanistan would follow almost automatically. The barrier against Bolshevism would have been strongly built; the road would be open to that peaceful economic penetration which, in Euro-Asiatic or Euro-African relations, is the normal prelude to absorption.

Downing Street saw that the very fact that Anglo-Turkish relations were bad, and that there was definite cause of quarrel in the Mosul dispute, offered an admirable opening for such a policy. Skilfully conducted the settlement of sharp differences is an admirable prelude to an entente.

There must, according to all tradition, be two steps in the game. For it is an article of faith with our diplomacy that the Turk is an " Oriental," and that in all dealings with " Orientals " you must begin with a display of force, lest any conciliation be regarded as a sign of weakness. This Ethel M. Dellish conception of the way to treat " Orientals " has, incidentally, been responsible for an amazing series of diplomatic blunderings. But our diplomats do not lightly forsake their romantic conceptions.

The plain need for making friends with Turkey, added to this Dellish illusion about " Orientals " therefore determined the course of the negotiation. First the firm hand. The Turk must

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be shown that if he continued to defy the British Empire he would pay very dearly for the amusement. When he had been taught this lesson he could be shown that if on the other hand he would enter the British parlour there would be very solid advantages awaiting him. To put things with an indecent bluntness, the plan was first to bully, then to bribe.

The obtaining, by some patient, not over easy, diplomacy, of judgment in Iraq's favour from the League of Nations was a necessary preliminary. But clearly the matter would not be left in the hands of the League; for the League could only reiterate its decision, could not bargain with Angora as the Foreign Office proposed to do. Turkey's anticipated refusal to recognise the Geneva judgment gave the necessary opportunity. Mr. Baldwin —nicely suited to the rôle—made the necessary "friendly gesture," offered to negotiate. He explained to an approving House of Commons that the Government was anxious for neighbourly amity and co-operation with Turkey, and that he proposed himself to begin conversations with the Turkish Ambassador. The Tory Press loudly praised this new evidence of the upright character and lofty idealism of the Prime Minister. The Liberal Press nodded complacently. And, of course, the warning note sounded in the *Daily Herald* was discounted as due to mere prejudice and cynicism.

Mr. Baldwin for the blandishment. The policy needed also a bully. For England prefers, when possible, to do her bullying by proxy. It is less disturbing to the Baldwin pose.

Now anyone looking round Europe for a bully would not look long. The qualifications of one candidate are too patent to be missed. And by great good fortune Turkey was the very state on which Signor Mussolini had his own eyes. Anatolia is his obvious plunder-ground. The coast which Italy had in her grip in 1919 and then (to Mussolini's intense disgust) abandoned is temptingly visible from the walls of Rhodes.

Sir Austen—by another happy chance—was in Italy, recuperating after the strenuous labours of the Locarno pact. The two statesmen met. They made, of course, no treaty, no pact, no agreement. These are crude methods of diplomacy not suitable to countries in which Parliament, whatever its faults, has an

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

awkward knack of asking disconcerting questions. So (with a view to the possibility of having to issue categoric denials that any agreement had been made) the two statesmen—after the classic example of Sir Edward Grey—merely exchanged views as to possible action in certain eventualities.

Suppose Turkey proved recalcitrant, would make no agreement. Suppose a war—in which, of course, she would be defying not merely Great Britain but the majesty of the League of Nations itself. Suppose this happened, would it be likely that Italy and her client, Greece, would care to take a hand ?

Italy—and Greece—most certainly would be delighted. But—supposing such a thing should happen, and Turkey were well defeated. There would have to be a new peace settlement. Would the British Government have any objection then to Greece coming back to Smyrna and repossessing herself of the Aidin Vilayet? And if Italy wanted the country to the south, the Meander Valley and Adalia and away east to perhaps Selindi or Anemur—would Great Britain support the claim ?

Naturally no promise of such a kind could be given. Certainly it would be unthinkable that a British Government—above all a Baldwin Government—could strike bargains for the partition of a State with which it was about to open friendly negotiations. But, as between gentlemen—one might almost venture to say as between Fascists, for was not His Britannic Excellency becoming an honorary member of that exalted body—as between gentlemen Sir Austen's views would be profoundly interesting to Sir Benito.

They were. They were both interesting and satisfactory. Sir Benito's views were equally interesting to Sir Austen. Had they been men of a lower social order they would have winked on parting. But Knights of the Garter do not wink, though they might advance their motto in extenuation.

Sir Austen came home. The necessary military preparations began. Angora guessed what had been afoot at Rapallo, and began to calculate the odds. They were clearly too great. The Soviet Union was the only reliable friend; and the Soviet Union could not help defend the Lycian coast or help repulse a Greek descent, backed, as in 1919, by the British Fleet, on the ruined water front of Smyrna. The Serbian Government, sounded by Rushdi

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bey on his way home from Paris, showed no eagerness to create a diversion by a move on Salonica. It would be too risky an enterprise; the candle of Salonica was not worth the game of challenging Italy and defying the League.

Therefore the astute diplomats of Angora decided that, since war was impossible, negotiation was necessary. A cordial, but guarded reply, was sent to Mr. Baldwin's kind invitation. Chuckling with glee, the Tory Press pointed out that Angora's new attitude was occasioned by a

> healthy fear that, in the event of a conflict over Mosul, Italy, Greece and even other Balkan States (the reference is to Bulgaria with whom there had also been an "exchange of views") would not remain indifferent, but would see in it a useful and legitimate opportunity for carrying out their own aspirations and ambitions in Asia Minor.

That was the *Daily Telegraph*. The *Morning Post* began to drop hints of the next move

> The Russian Treaty was "practically valueless to Turkey." It was positively dangerous. "The association of Turkey with her dangerous and unstable neighbour can bring no good to Turkey, and might result in her irremediable injury; for it must eventually bring Turkey both within the power of the Soviet and to enmity with the Western European Powers.
>
> "The policy of Great Britain has always been friendly to the Turks. The overtures made by the Prime Minister are in accordance with the traditional attitude of this country towards Turkey . .
>
> "The British Government has condoned Turkey's infringement of the rules of international comity and expressed its willingness to give every consideration to the requirements of the Turkish Government. That Government cannot hope to receive a similar offer from any other nation, for no other nation can command the requisite resources, with the exception of the United States, which will do nothing for Turkey.
>
> "Great Britain, however, in her dealings with Turkey, can rely upon the support of both France and Italy; and the worth of the friendship of the three most powerful nations in Europe is hardly to be despised."

And so on. A little crudely put perhaps. But one must not expect subtlety from the *Morning Post*. Besides it is as well to be frank with "Orientals"; to leave them no doubt of the bigness of your stick and the fatness of your purse, so that it is easy for them to choose which they prefer you to employ.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The objective of the negotiation was, then, plain enough. But the process of negotiating was delicate and complex. Secrecy was essential, and at once agreed to by both parties. And Sir Ronald Lindsay went to Angora towards the end of January.

First move was clearly for the Turks to ask what Great Britain would give them if they recognised Iraq's sovereignty over Mosul. It would have been crude to reply in the words of Punch's historic Fashoda cartoon—"You'll see what I'll give you if you don't." Something must obviously be done to save the face of the Turkish Government, and to allay its fears that Southern Kurdistan would be used as a base for fomenting insurrection in the north. A slight rectification of frontier and a share in the oil royalties would do the first. Satisfactory assurances could be given on the second. There was, it was felt, small doubt that this would more than satisfy the Turkish Government. To Angora, hard pressed for ready money, half a million pounds in the hand would far outweigh hypothetical chances of securing Mosul by arms—even were there no Italian, Greek and Bulgarian fleets and armies threatening the Western marches of the Republic.

But, of course, if Turkey wanted more ; if she would like not a slight frontier rectification but the cession of a large slice of territory; if she would like not a tiny half-million or so but a substantial loan; if she would like some arrangement that would ease her of part of her existing debt burden; then these things might be obtainable, on conditions.

Rushdi Bey, following the traditional and often successful technique of Turkish diplomacy, temporised. He wanted time to consider matters; really time to look round again and see if there were possibilities of support elsewhere. There seemed to be, for already M. de Jouvenel, new High Commissioner in Syria, was suggesting negotiations for the final delimitation of the Turco-Syrian frontier. France was not pleased by the prospect of a British ascendancy at Angora—which would mean the waste of much past effort on her part. M. de Jouvenel was quite ready to jump in quickly, repeat the coup of M. Franklin Bouillon, and prove to Kemal Pasha and his colleagues that the real friend was Codlin of Paris, not Short of London. He came to Angora on

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

February 10, a week or so after Sir Ronald had returned to Constantinople to report. Before another week was out he had provisionally signed a pact with which the Turks had good reason to be pleased. It gave them a good slice of valuable railway line. It provided for joint neutrality between Turkey and Syria. It did enough besides to arouse intense indignation in the Foreign Office. M. de Jouvenel had, indeed, done too well. He had not realised that the financial relations of Great Britain and France made it impossible for the Quai d'Orsay to defy Downing Street and to thwart its plans in this light manner. Strong—very strong—representations were made in Paris, and M. Briand hastily promised that before the treaty was definitely signed everything objectionable to Great Britain should be taken out of it. General Sarraut was sent off to Angora to revise M. de Jouvenel's over-zealous production.

Rushdi Bey's effort had failed. France could not help him. Russia, equally, could give no immediate effective aid. Things were going well with the project—due in the first place to Fevzi Pasha, the Chief of Staff, of a Turco-Persian-Afghan entente; but that could scarcely affect the situation. The reality of the Italo-Greek menace was now beyond question. Turkey was encircled. She must come to terms. Sir Ronald Lindsay came back to Angora in early March to find Rushdi ready to do business, ready to suggest terms on which Turkey would break—in fact if not, for the moment, in theory, her understanding with Russia, and would come into the League of Nations as an ally of the British Empire. If Sir Ronald would get a firm offer from his Government, they could get to business at once.

The plan, it seemed, had worked to perfection. The desired breach had been made between the Soviet Union and its only ally. And in the breach, if one may strain the metaphor, had been built a new section of the wall of encirclement round the Red Republics. There remained only the details of the bargain to be arranged—always a troublesome matter with "Orientals," but still a matter that could certainly be fixed with a little patience.

Sir Ronald went home to London to get authority for a firm offer. Before he returned to Angora, Sir William Tyrrell decided conveniently to take a holiday in Rome—as befitted a devout

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Catholic. He saw Signor Mussolini. The war talk died down. The war preparations ceased. Official statements assured the world that Italy's intentions towards Turkey were as peaceful as her feelings were friendly. All was ready for the final triumph.

Sir Ronald went back to Angora. If Turkey were willing to break with Russia and to come at once into the League, England was willing that she should be given back a substantial portion of Southern Kurdistan. She should get her loan in the City—not, perhaps, the £30,000,000 Rushdi had suggested, but say £20,000,000 in three or four instalments. Arrangements could be made for a substantial reduction of the Ottoman Debt in consideration of the State properties which were passing to Iraq.

The bargaining began. The Turks asked more. The British refused. The familar process went on. Agreement seemed to be getting very near indeed. All danger of war had completely passed away. The world was waiting the signature of the treaty.

And then, quietly but firmly, Rushdi Bey declared that the outstanding points of difference were insuperable, that the British offer was not enough, that Turkey would revert to the original bargain and recognise the annexation of Mosul to Iraq in return for the slight rectification of frontier, the assurances about Kurdistan, the £500,000 share in the Mosul royalties.

Whether this had been the Turks' intention all the time and they had merely entered on the wider negotiation in order to gain time until the war-danger was over; or whether, at the last moment, realising, as good Anatolians must have done since the days of Priam, the dangers of Western gifts, they decided that to take the British offer would be, in effect, to sell the independence they had won so dearly; these are matters the truth of which is probably known only to Kemal and Ismet and Rushdi. But whatever that truth may be, the effect was the same.

The British were in an impossible position. They could not draw back. They could not reject an arrangement which conceded all that they could confess to have been seeking. Italy and Greece might have been let loose on a Turkey defying the League of Nations. But it was impossible to do anything against a Turkey prepared, on the most reasonable terms, to accept the judgment of the League. There was nothing for it but to put a good face

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on an unpleasant situation, sign the treaty, and pretend to be highly gratified that the Mosul question had been settled.

And indeed that is something, as I said earlier. But a small thing by comparison with the bigger, which had seemed actually within grasp and then had suddenly eluded it.

For consider the position. Turkey is decidedly stronger for having abandoned a practically hopeless claim and for being no longer representable as defying its own treaty obligations and the authority of the League. Turkey is still closely linked with Russia—a fact announced dramatically to the world by the signature of a new protocol supplementing the Treaty of Paris. Turkey has signed a treaty of mutual guarantee and amity with Persia, and has strengthened her relations with Afghanistan—moves which would have been very satisfactory if British influence were dominant in Angora, but terribly dangerous under these different circumstances. The position in southern Asia, in fact, altered not for the better but very markedly for the worse—as the recent outbreak of acute nervous anxiety in Simla testifies.

And in Europe the Locarno system still further shaken. Italy and Greece angry, feeling that they have been used as catspaws, looking elsewhere for "compensation," preparing diplomatic opposition everywhere to Great Britain and France. Signor Mussolini threatening to make a political and commercial entente with Moscow unless Italy is granted compensation elswhere—in Abyssinia, Tangier, Tunis—for her baulked ambitions in Anatolia.

Those are the net results of a prettily devised diplomatic campaign in which there was only one flaw. It was based upon a totally false conception of the character of the Turkish statesmen—on the belief that they are some curious kind of "Oriental" who can always be successfully dealt with by an admixture of bullying and bribing. That traditional and closely-cherished fallacy has once again made a ghastly mess of this country's Eastern policy.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CANTON

By Colonel C. L. MALONE

OF all the great cities of China, Canton remains in the memory as the most interesting and the most wonderful. The city of Canton is 90 miles from Hongkong situated at the apex of the great delta of the Chu-kiang and Si-kiang rivers, which, as one approaches Canton, winds through flooded rice-fields and carefully tended litchi-orchards. It lies just within the tropics, having a reputed population variously estimated at two to three millions, including nearly half a million living in sampans, small shallow boats with curved shelters like half a barrel, and in these sometimes artistically fitted out "house-boats," little more than floating huts, families are born, live and die—a floating population indeed.

The commercial activity dates back to before 1511, when the Portuguese arrived at Canton, from which time it has grown from a small native camp to the market of Southern China.

There is a striking contrast even between the appearance of Canton and the other great cities of China. Elsewhere in China where East and West have come into contact—Tientsin, Hankow, Shanghai, for instance—the Foreign Settlement is the modern town with electric light, proper drainage, asphalt roads, trackless trams and other outward symbols of so-called civilisation ; whereas the Chinese quarter of these towns is in general mediæval and rather dirty.

Canton is just the reverse. The island of Shameen, the Foreign Concession, two-thirds British and one-third French, separated only by a narrow canal with two bridges from the main town of Canton, is rather a fly-blown corner—more so than ever at the time of my visit—as, owing to the strike, there had been few if any coolies on the island for nearly a year. On the other hand, the Chinese town occupying the main city is modern, clean, with new roads, motor buses, large hotels and stores. Canton dispels the idea which foreigners would like to give to the world that the Chinese cannot construct and maintain a modern city.

Shameen gave me the impresssion of a plague-stricken city.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

You leave the active Chinese town, with its noises and its shouts, its teeming crowds of sweating coolies, women as well as men, staggering under gigantic loads ; you come to the Shakee Bund where 52 Chinese were killed and 117 wounded on the never-to-be-forgotten June 23, 1925, your car or rickshaw stops, the road is up, gangs of coolies are working, turning the Shakee Bund into a great avenue with modern surface and trees, soon to be called the Avenue of June the Twenty-Third, in memory of that fateful day; past the armed strike picket in simple blue cotton uniform with red arm band who search all who wish to enter Shameen ; you cross the British Bridge and are confronted by Sikh Police, barbed wire and sandbags.

As you glance around while crossing the bridge along the narrow canal separating Shameen from Canton, with the buildings on either side—the office fronts on Shakee and the Victoria Hotel on Shameen still pocked with rifle and machine-gun bullet holes—you may well wonder how the British Consul or anyone else standing on that bridge could really have been able to swear on which side of the narrow waterway the first shot was fired, whether by the peaceful procession of students or by the armed foreigners on Shameen.

Dilapidated sandbag redoubts block every path converging towards the town, the telephone wires sag broken and unused, the Chinese post office is deserted, overgrown and covered with cobwebs. Rubbish is lying everywhere, fallen leaves cover the bricks of a half-finished building where the Chinese workers dropped their tools last June. White Russians and others maintain the little motor-boat which meets foreigners who chance to come in the usually empty steamer from Hongkong. The new British Acting Consul-General at Shameen sits in his office hoping to clear up the mess which his predecessors have made of Sino-British relations in Southern China.

Shameen, as far as one can see, will not last long. Apart from political considerations it is unbusinesslike. The British Consul and the business interests which he guards would be well advised to follow the German Consul into one of the main streets of the town where the business of the city is being conducted, instead of isolating themselves behind metaphorical drawbridges.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Canton is inseparably associated with the name of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The City has always been the centre of Chinese progress. It is an interesting phenomenon that tropical Canton should be able to produce better organisers, clearer thinkers and harder workers than the cooler plains of the North.

Partly, also, perhaps because of its foreign contacts, Canton has been the historic mother of Chinese revolt. The Taiping rebellion began here, and Sun Yat-sen made it the centre of his long struggle against the Manchu Emperors. When Yuan Shi-kai betrayed the republic, Canton was the centre of the republican movement in China. The fact that the Government of Canton is the most progressive in China to-day cannot, therefore, be debited or credited solely to the political and military advisers brought from Soviet Russia. It has its historic origin. But the work done by Borodin and his assistants in Canton has shaped China's progress and rendered service to the Chinese people and especially to the Chinese workers which stands out in vivid contrast with the "assistance" given by the other Great Powers.

Whilst Canton has thus for long been the seat of progressive activities it was not until last year that radical organisations held the reins of power, when the Kuomintang (People's National Party) for the first time formed the Government. Up to that time, whilst Dr. Sun had nominally been the head, the political position in Canton was dominated by the presence of the Yunnanese mercenary troops. These were finally defeated and driven out in June, 1925, by the new Russian trained Canton Army—the Whampoa cadets.

The Government in Canton is now a purely Party Government composed of members of the Kuomintang. But in order that the situation in Canton may be clear, it is necessary to give some explanation of the Kuomintang Party throughout China.

The Kuomintang was founded by Dr. Sun Yat-sen on the famous San-min or threefold people's principles: Nationality, Race Equality and Democratic Government.

In February, 1924, a national congress of Dr. Sun's party was held in Canton and a bitter struggle took place between the right and left wings, resulting in a split. There is now a well-organised left wing Kuomintang in association with the Communists, having its headquarters at Canton and controlled by an executive of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thirty-five members. In May of this year the question of Communist affiliation to this left wing Kuomintang was discussed at an important conference, and it was decided that, while Communists may be members they may not hold office in the party.

Throughout China there are heterogeneous groups as well as individual members of the Kuomintang—the right wing they appear to be—who say that the Canton Kuomintang is illegal and a breakaway. So far as the right wing groups have a central organisation, there is an office at Shanghai in the French Concession and an executive of twenty-five. They held a conference on March 29, 1926, attended by 130 members, but it is stated that they were entirely from the Shanghai environs.

There is no fundamental difference in policy between the organised left wing centralised at Canton and the scattered right wing dissentients, except on one important point.

All are Nationalist, all oppose the Unequal Treaties, and so on; But the anti-lefts are anti-Russian. They talk about Soviet Imperialism in Mongolia ; to which the Russians make the logical reply that if there is Soviet assistance in Mongolia it does not bargain for concessions and railway revenues such as other Powers invariably insist on in return for any help they may render. The right wing say that the Soviet should have demonstrated their friendship to China by giving up the Chinese Eastern Railway (the dispute regarding this railway in the early part of this year will be recalled), but are unable to answer the question, " Would this not really mean simply the surrender of the railway to Japan, in view of the Japanese domination of Manchuria ? "

As a natural sequence of their anti-Russian attitude, they also oppose communist membership of the Kuomintang.

On the whole, the Kuomintang in Canton, which also has its different shades—it is very important to remember that the struggle within the Canton Kuomintang itself is a left and right struggle—is the more powerful force in China. They are actually doing executive work and one earnestly trusts that the scattered Kuomintang elements throughout China will find a means of coming together, for the Nationalist elements in China are so weak that they cannot well afford to be divided.

So we get back to the Canton Government. Actually in Canton

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there are three concentric governments, the Canton National Government holding sway over the provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi and part of the province of Hunan, the provincial Government of Kwangtung and the municipal Government of Canton City.

The Municipal Government was formed on July 4, 1925. They wanted to have an electoral system, but found that the people were not ready for it. So they nominated members in the proportion and representing the interests which they thought should be on the Council. There are eighteen members : three each representing merchants, workers, peasants, educationalists, the liberal professions (doctors, lawyers, &c.) and big industries (electrical works, &c.). The salary is only nominal—$500 (Mexican) a year. There are peasant members because the area includes some country districts surrounding the town.

With regard to the National Canton Government, *i.e.*, that controlling the three provinces, this is also composed of members of the Kuomintang Party. Throughout China all, even its enemies, praise the Canton Government as the most efficient and best managed that Kwangtung has known since the Republic.

Canton is important to China because it is the seat of the only Nationalist Government, a government fighting for the unification and liberation of China from the rule of bandit militarists and from foreign control. For the rest China is under the rule of a number of militarists. The influence of Canton, therefore, throughout China is bound to be great. Kalgan to the north-west of Peking is at present the headquarters of the Kuominchun (the People's National Army) which is in sympathy with the Kuomintang in Canton, although it is not actually the armed force of that party. Should the Kuominchun descend from its fortified position behind the Nankou pass and reoccupy Peking, the effect on the National movement in China might be very great.

Probably, however, the question which should interest readers of The Labour Monthly most is the fact that Canton is the headquarters of the " Red " Labour Movement and of other progressive organisations in China ; mostly, of course (and there is no secret about it), of Russian inspiration.

Most important of these is the " All China Labour Federation."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It was difficult to get very accurate information regarding its membership. Some of the figures obtained from different sources differed widely.

According to the third Congress just held, there are 699 unions comprising 1,241,245 workers. The Council of Labour Unions of Canton—a kind of local Trades Council—comprises 96 unions including 180,000 members. The central committee of the All China Labour Federation consists of 35 members. They represent the following national unions and industrial centres : Seamen 3, Railwaymen 4, Miners 4, Shanghai 7, Hankow 6, Hupeh 1, Kwansi 1, Tienstin 1, Shangtung 1, Peking 1.

It was stated that all the leaders were workers, but it appeared that a great many organisers were of the student class. This is perfectly natural in the early days of Labour organisation among people who have had no opportunity of becoming literate.

The seamen, railwaymen and miners have national organisations.

Shanghai is the largest industrial centre in China. Canton is not really an industrial city in the modern sense. There are the handicraft workers, chiefly organised in guilds, but the most important sections are the seamen and the silk workers. The Canton Government has not had time to attend to labour legislation yet, but at the conference this year a resolution was passed urging the National Government promptly to announce measures for Labour protection. The time must come when the All China Labour Federation will turn from purely political anti-foreign activities to broader Labour organisation.

As elsewhere in China there are in Canton rival "yellow" or "not so red" unions containing about 10,000 members. These are chiefly transformed guilds.

The Canton Strike Committee, whose chief work is the enforcement of the boycott against British goods, which was declared as the result of the shooting of Chinese men and women last year, is subordinate to the All China Labour Federation. Its official title is the "Hongkong-Canton Strike Committee of the All China Labour Federation." It consists of thirteen members, and Sou Chiu Ging is the chairman. He is also the chairman of the All China Labour Federation and of the Seamen's Union, in which

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

capacity he has led many strikes at Hong-kong. The Committee contains representatives of the Hong-kong stevedores, longshoremen, transport workers, servants and also the workers on Shameen, the Foreign Concession.

There is great discipline among the strikers. Delegate meetings, about 600 strong, are held three times a week. No Chinese can leave Canton for Hong-kong without a pass from the Strike Committee. No incoming vessel can unload at Canton without the permission of the Strike Committee which has established a kind of Customs inspection without a tariff. Outside the office of the Strike Committee is a large marquee where auctions of contraband, *i.e.*, British goods, are held. The place is filled with sacks and bags of rice and millet, tins of petrol and other goods confiscated by the pickets.

Almost as important as the Labour Federation is the "Canton Federation of Peasants' Unions." The influence of this organisation is more or less confined to Kwangtung and Kwangsi. There are sixty-six districts comprising 60,000 members.

Another activity at Canton is the organisation of women. The condition of Chinese women is very bad. They have many children. Frequently Chinese women in the south can be seen doing hard work with small babies strapped on their backs. Especially does one see them rowing large heavy boats both at Hongkong and Canton in this fashion. The boat women on the Pearl River are famous. Unfortunately the women's organisation is very short of funds and the terrible condition of the women who work both in the silk filatures and on the river has not yet been touched. A beginning is, however, now being made with the formation of groups and circles for propaganda work.

Finally, there is Whampoa, the military academy, on an island of that name situated about an hour's run by motor boat from Canton. When I visited Whampoa with General Chiang Kai Shih, last May, there were 2,800 military students at the academy. They are well disciplined and the barracks were clean and orderly. Political training is, as might be imagined, an important part of the curriculum. It is useless to deny that force is the governing factor in China to-day and unfortunately much energy has to be expended in putting down banditry and piracy.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Canton folks say that much of the banditry in their area is conceived in Hong-kong. Every time that there is disorder in Canton, rents go up in Hong-kong, because rich Chinese go there to seek shelter and deposit their money. The Canton dollar depreciates, the Hong-kong dollar appreciates. The Hong-kong merchants can buy more Canton goods. It is not, therefore, a matter for surprise if some persons in Hong-kong should, as is generally alleged, take a friendly interest in the continuance of banditry in Kwangtung.

The Canton Government is as much the Government of China as are the militarists Sun Chun-fang, Wu Pei Fu and Chang Tso-lin. Certainly it represents the National aspirations of new China as do none of these three nor their puppets who may temporarily hold the reins of government in Peking. But the surplus of the foreign controlled customs, including that from Kwangtung, nevertheless goes to Peking, often to be used against Canton in munitions and men.

The time is coming when the play-acting at Peking will have to cease. But whilst Canton is the government of China as much as, if not more than, Peking, it is unlikely that the Foreign Powers can reasonably yet recognise it as such. What certainly should be done is that the customs surplus of the two Kwangs district should be given to the Canton Government pending the granting of tariff autonomy.

One day Canton may be the capital of China. By the time that these notes appear in print, the Hong-kong-Canton strike negotiations will have begun and will even perhaps have ended. Both sides now desire a settlement. The building up of Whampoa as a rival port to "kill" Hong-kong is now no longer a part of the programme of the Canton Government.

Democracies throughout the world must follow events in South China closely and raise their voice against any attempt to overthrow the Canton Government with the aid of Wu Pei Fu or any other opponent.

Left to develop and to consolidate its position, Canton offers one of the best hopes for China. Students trained at Kwangtung University and Whampoa Military Academy may one day be the leaders of a great democratic and united China.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SECRET SERVICE AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

By HAROLD GRENFELL

OUR present Parliamentary vote for " Secret Services " is nearly ten times greater than its pre-War figure. Before 1914 the greater part of the comparatively small sum voted (£40,000) was spent upon acquiring information *abroad* of supposed naval or military interest. At the present time almost the whole of a far larger amount is used for purposes of political spying *at home*, thus pretty plainly showing which, by the ruling powers, is considered the more important " Front."

It is generally admitted that the Special Branch of Scotland Yard has been formed expressly to " follow " the spread of so-called Revolutionary thought in this country. Consequently, there can be no doubt but that Secret Service funds are being employed in maintaining an army of agents, abroad and at home, whose duty is to provide information for use against the new " National Peril " that now, in ministerial minds, appears to take the place of the former " German Danger " ; and this altered direction of the activities of the State Spy Service faithfully reflects the change in the outlook and obsession of the ruling class. The increase in amount of money provided may, therefore, fairly be taken as recognition of the relative strength and importance of the two enemies, and lends weight to the opinion of many of those who since 1914 have had special opportunities for observation, that your conscious Capitalist's fear of his fellow countrymen workers is far more deeply rooted than any that ever he lately and loudly professed against the " Hun."

When, too, one remembers that the inevitable offspring of fear is hatred, it becomes easier to understand the main reason against any possibility of reconciliation, or for any kind of co-operation, between convinced adherents of the two schools of political thought, whose fundamental antagonism is the cause of that overwhelming pre-occupation which now worries the Cabinet of every

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

" democratically " governed country throughout the two hemispheres.

However, when considering the present use of the Secret Service, involving the employment of special " Political Police," working in close touch with, indeed including within its ranks, Government spies, we should not forget (although most of us, happily, have done so) that this unpleasant institution is no novelty in our history. One has but to turn back to records of the disturbed times of the Napoleonic war, when Pitt's harsh repressive legislation was aimed at the subversive ideas let loose by the French Revolution, or to those of the years, terrible to English workers, that followed Waterloo and Peterloo, to find many instances of the " Secret Service " of those days.

No political trial (and these were not few) took place without the assistance of spies, informers, agents-provocateurs, whether the accused were country labourers accustomed to starve on 8s. a week, or the more educated townsmen of the Cato Street " Conspiracy." Consequently, the unreliability and lying habits of these base tools, the evil effects of and dangers arising from their employ, are all handy for the information of our present rulers, who must, therefore, very well know that " evidence " sworn to and provided by spies in 1925 is not likely to be any more trustworthy than that of their fore-runners of 1824. For, one inevitable and fatal weakness of any " Secret Political Police " system is its own inherent tendency to corruption.

History teems with examples in support of this statement. Leaving out the classical instance of the " Holy Inquisition," although this is particularly applicable, since the political motive that brought it into being is precisely the same as that which now underlies the crusade against Communism (just as the " League of Nations " is merely the twentieth century form of the " Holy Alliance "), Napoleon's organisation under Fouché, the Austrian institutions in Italy, the " Okhrana " of all the Romanovs since Peter, the " Black and Tan " infamy in Ireland, are all sufficiently recent, and sufficiently mal-odorous, reminders of its truth.

And this, not because of any extra-national wickedness in " foreigners," but solely due to the foul conditions of the institution itself. Therefore, let no one suppose that our present organisa-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion is immune from the taint of corruption merely because it is "British." The character and moral sense of hired spies are not, *a priori*, of a specially high order. The average man's healthy loathing for their ugly business is plentiful proof of this fact.

Their temptations and opportunities for dishonestly making money are many and varied; the risks of discovery, exposure, or prosecution practically do not exist. In these circumstances it is impossible that a sensible proportion of these "agents" do not rapidly become venal and entirely untrustworthy. Whilst our Government spies, up to 1914, were mostly used for the work of trying to get hold of German naval and military secrets, usually improvements in material and technique, their activity had at least some connection with the objective world, and it was possible to judge of their value, intelligence, or truthfulness by relation to subsequently known facts. But, with their present day employment in a realm of purest subjectivity, that of making reports upon the supposed opinions, sayings, associations and sympathies of suspected "Revolutionaries," there can be no bounds to the sweep of a dishonest "agent's" imagination or inventive faculties, and no reliable means, even given the desire, for his superiors to acquire a real estimation of his trustworthiness.

And, this being the case, once Ministers begin to rely and take action (as we see that they do) upon reports so furnished, the doors are open wide to every abuse, and the evil machine rapidly tends to become independent of its masters, through this exercise of irresponsible power.

This consideration, one may confidently assert, provides the real explanation of the notorious "Zinoviev Letter" scandal. The original "document" was forged, no doubt, some time before, and without thought of the 1924 Election, either as part of the general attack upon the Government that began so soon as MacDonald was forced by the pressure of the Labour Movement into signing the dropped Anglo-Russian Treaty, or merely as a means to show how useful, efficient and indispensable is our present Secret Service. In either case, it is likely that the "finders" of the famous "Letter" would have been well paid for their discovery; but, clearly, so soon as the General Election appeared in sight, they could realise that they had got hold of a veritable gold-mine.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And, when it came to an inquiry, it is now quite obvious that the Committee set up by MacDonald was simply not allowed to probe too deeply into the " Letter's " origins. The only reasonable explanation of this Committee's failure to discover the truth is the supposition that the Secret Service, relying upon the support of the reactionary Press and other organisations hostile to Labour, felt itself sufficiently powerful to make use of sabotage. Because, on a supposition that your Secret Service is reliable, and loyal to whatever Government happens to be in office, it is clear that a short process of research by elimination must soon have produced the individual who provided the document from which was made the " typed copy " that came into the Foreign Office. And further examination behind this person could hardly have failed to establish whence the " document," if any, had been received, and the reason why no original, that could be shown, was in existence.

But Mr. Baldwin also set up his own Committee of Enquiry. Now, in this case, the members being Conservative Ministers, and assuming, as we must, that these desired to reach the truth of the mystery, " sabotage " tactics would have been too risky a proceeding, since it is a matter of common knowledge that the Tory party has more intimate sympathies for, and is in closer relation with, the Secret Service than the other political organisations, and consequently may be expected to know correspondingly more about the inner details of its working. It, therefore, may be taken for granted that the present Cabinet is perfectly aware of the whole truth of the origin of the " Zinoviev Letter," and equally we may be sure that it will continue to keep this information to itself.

The moral that Labour can draw from this account is that MacDonald having omitted, or failed, to destroy the " Secret Service," the latter quickly mastered and, in the end, destroyed him ; and did so with greater zest and energy, since temperamentally it is bound to side with the enemies of the Movement of which MacDonald is titular leader.

It is a well-known fact that political Secret Services and political police organisations consist, in overwhelming proportion, of men belonging to the most extreme and ignorant sections of reactionary obscurantist opinion ; and, at the present moment, of course, contain a large element of the flotsam and jetsam left

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rotting upon our shores by the moral backwash of the "Great War." In our own country and under our present system, such men inevitably are bitter enemies of the workers and their aspirations, even before taking on the dirty job of spying upon them. But, as their work is both lazy and lucrative, and because all political police institutions must become corrupt and callous owing to the infected medium in which they work, they feel no aversion from helping to support the crimes and cruelties inseparable from the exercise of political reaction's oppressive and repressive activities. There is, therefore, no reason whatever to delude ourselves with the idea that the organisations in this country are cleaner than those abroad, that, in fact, our own branch of it is honest, loyal, upright, not venal nor cruel, merely because it happens to be British.

And because of all this, it may perhaps be permitted to ask what was the actual reason working in the mind of MacDonald, his attitude as Prime Minister towards the Labour Movement, for not having destroyed, or at least broken, the power for evil of a political instrument whose admitted object of existence is to work against the spread of the ideas and activities of this Movement? He could have abolished it, had he chosen, by one stroke of an administrative pen, and without fear or compunction; for, in this case at any rate, he would have had all decent public opinion with him, irrespective of political party, both within and without Parliament.

It is little consolation for Socialists to reflect that MacDonald's failure to deal with the Secret Service brought about his own downfall and discredited his own reputation, because on this occasion the institution justified its existence, twice over, in official eyes, and thereby has acquired an even greater hold on the esteem and appreciation of present Ministers. On the contrary, what we have now more reason to expect is that Secret Service spies already are preparing some new, equally dramatic, and equally mendacious, "exposure," against the next crisis that may arise fraught with real importance to the Labour Movement.

Chosen extracts from the material carried off by the Special Branch officers from the Communist Party's headquarters in King Street last October, have been prepared for issue as a "White Paper" or official document, to affect the public mind with

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the idea of Communist wickedness, and so, no doubt, to help to prejudice the case against the miners.

But, with the recollection in its mind of the recent " Zinoviev Letter " forgery, which so powerfully helped to place the present Government in power, coupled with the fact that when the Special Branch search premises the elementary public safeguard of giving receipts for the documents carried off, or of requiring these originals to be signed or initialed by a representative of the party raided, is never carried out, the intelligent section of the public is not likely to attach great credit or importance to any such publication. It is, indeed, a scandal, opening doors to their widest to possibilities —nay, certainties—of fraud and deception by " political police agents," that this primary precaution for the safety of the individual (and of the public !) is not insisted upon by the guardians of our judicial system. The " liberty of the subject " is pure mockery so long as the present practice prevails, and each one of us, at any moment, is at the mercy of police spies, who, once they have obtained a search warrant, can " plant " as many compromising documents upon our premises as they please.

This may seem strong language to some, but most of us who have taken any active interest in Russian affairs since the end of the war can supply one or two personal instances of the baseness and corruption with which this detestable system has already affected British " agents."

Meanwhile, British workers will do well, through their various political and industrial organisations, to force from their Parliamentary leaders an unequivocal undertaking to sweep away the whole apparatus of " Secret Service " at the earliest opportunity, and an open acknowledgment that they realise the fact of its existence as the conscious and willing tool of Labour's enemies.

Moreover, they should refuse for one moment to listen to any specious argument for its retention, even in modified form, after Labour's return to political power, as a weapon of defence against possible " unconstitutional " activities of their political enemies ; remembering that untrustworthy reports, false evidence, and unjust (and unjustifiable) prosecutions, are unavoidable accompaniments of any such system, which can but serve to prejudice and discredit any administration.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The World of Labour

	Page
Finland : Trade Union Congress	498
Norway : General Lock-out	498
Labour and Socialist International : Proposed Unity Conference	499
Japan : Workers' and Peasants' Party	500

FINLAND

Trade Union Congress

THE Annual Congress of the Finnish Trade Unions took place at Helsingfors from May 3 to 8. There were seventy-five delegates present, of which seventeen were reported to be Social-Democrats (see The Labour Monthly, April, 1926, p. 249). Most of the business was concerned with the questions brought forward by this section, which has since declared its intention of working for the realisation of its views within the Federation. Thus the threatened split has not occurred.

After much discussion, the decision previously taken to affiliate to the R.I.L.U. was formally rescinded, and it was decided to affiliate to neither International. The Congress declared itself in favour of an international conference to discuss a united Trade Union International, and declared its support of the Anglo-Russian Committee.

The new National Committee was empowered to send delegates to the International Labour Conference at Geneva.

A motion on "political neutrality" was carried, which forbids any union or branch to affiliate to a political party, or to support it financially, or to carry out work which "properly belongs to political parties."

Finally, the National Committee was elected, consisting of thirty members, with the result that it included ten Social-Decomrats, one of whom was appointed chairman.

NORWAY

General Lock-Out

THERE is to be observed in Norway a typical "crisis of stabilisation," with the familiar concomitants of reduction of the working-class standard of living and unemployment and acute class-struggle. The method adopted has been deflation of the currency. During the later half of 1925 the krone fell from 27.5 to 23.5 to the £, and this appreciation has since continued, though more slowly. Prices fell to a certain extent, and

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unemployment increased, and in the spring approached a total of 50,000, roughly 25 per cent. of the whole working class.

The conclusion of new collective agreements in several industries at the end of March gave opportunity for an attack on wages, which was generally taken up. The sawmill and chemical workers agreed to 10s. reductions. The demands in other industries were greater, however, and included the reduction of holidays. No agreement could be reached, and the disputes went before the State Arbitration Court, which gave a decision which left hours and holidays unchanged, but proposed reductions of wages in the building trade by 12 per cent., in mining 14 per cent., and in the metal, textile and leather industries, 17 per cent. Further, new agreements were to be concluded in August in accordance with the cost-of-living figures. The employers regard the decision as satisfactory, and most of the Trade Union leaders advised acceptance. The voting of the workers, however, showed a two-thirds majority against.

Accordingly a lock-out in the industries concerned began on April 24 About 35,000 workers were at once affected, and the number increased during the subsequent weeks. The workers' position was strengthened by the inclusion of the shipping industry in the dispute, and by the agreement existing among the Scandinavian Trade Unions for mutual support. It was disastrously weakened however, by the unemployment, which had been heavy for months past, and the aggressive behaviour of the State. Accordingly, when the Arbitration Court met after a month, agreement was soon reached upon the basis of the new recommendations. These involved practically all the terms of its original findings except that providing for further adjustments of wages in August. These were to be postponed to February, 1927. The agreement was concluded on June 9, when the lock-out came to an end.

LABOUR AND SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

Proposed Unity Commission

At a meeting of the Executive of the Labour and Socialst International at Zurich on April 11, Mr. Brockway, for the I.L.P., moved the following resolution :—

> That in view of the urgent need of working class solidarity against Capitalist and Imperialist reaction and the menace of Fascism in Europe, the Executive of the Labour and Socialist International should suggest a joint conference to the Executive of the Third International with the object of exploring the possibilities of the formation of an all-inclusive International.

The reasons given officially by the I.L.P. for putting forward this proposal were as follows :—

> (1) The desirability of solidarity against capitalist reaction.
>
> (2) The Communist Party of Russia has repeatedly shown its readiness to modify its policy in accordance with changed circumstances, *e.g.*, N.E.P. The " thesis " of the Third International was adopted under the influence of the revolutionary psychology of the After-War period. The " realism " of the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Communist Party should face the changed circumstances and recognise that "armed revolution" is not the "inevitable" method.

(3) Tomsky's recent speech on Trade Union Unity shows a modification in attitude on the Industrial side of the International.

(4) Zinovief and the extremist leaders of the Third International have recently lost influence in Russia.

(5) There have been signs of a modification of Communist policy in many European countries and in increasing tendency to concentrate upon immediate issues, instead of the "armed revolution."

(6) British Communists have recently indicated that their conception of "armed revolution" is not a minority armed rising, but action by a Socialist Government to suppress any resistance by the possessing classes.

(7) It is imperative to bridge the gulf between Russia and the rest of Europe. Her isolated position is very dangerous. Just as it is important to bring her within the comity of nations, so it is important to bring her in close contact with the general labour and Socialist movement.

(8) Action on behalf of the Socialist prisoners in Russia and in support of political freedom there is likely to be more successful through consultation than by criticism hurled across division.

(9) It would clarify the position to get the Third International to declare its attitude. If insistence upon the "inevitability" of armed revolution and the necessity of preparing for it is maintained, the democratic parties would be in a stronger position to resist Communist affiliation nationally.

The I.L.P. suggested that the proposed conference should be unconditional, and that the L.S.I. should voice the questions of

(1) the view that armed conflict is inevitable; (2) the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) Communist views on the use of Parliamentary action; (4) the imprisonment of Social-Democrats, &c., in Russia; (5) the "disintegrating effect of Communist policies within the political and industrial movements in practically every country."

The proposal of the I.L.P. was further that the "basis for the formation of an all-inclusive International should be freedom of affiliated sections to act according to the particular political, social and economic circumstances which they have to face."

The resolution, which was opposed by Mr. Cramp for the British Labour Party, was lost by 247 votes to 3.

JAPAN

The Workers' and Peasants' Party in Japan

JAPAN has passed through a long, protracted economic crisis which started with the financial crisis of March, 1920, and which was followed by an industrial crisis. In addition there came the disastrous earthquake and fire in September, 1923, which destroyed financial organs together with the wealth and industries of Tokio and Yokohama, amounting to over five milliard yen. This disastrous blow to the economic life of the country set back its financial and economic recovery for several years. This is shown by the continued adverse balance of Japan's foreign trade. In 1923 imports exceeded exports by 534 million yen, in 1924 by 646 million yen; but in

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1925 the unfavourable trade balance had decreased to 260 million yen as a result of the depreciation in the value of the yen. In the meantime, however, the yen has again risen, which will reduce the possibilities of export.

All the parliamentary parties are afraid of the new elections under the new election law, according to which the number of the electors is increased from three millions to twelve millions, which means that the workers and peasants who previously had no vote will now exercise the franchise.

The present members of Parliament who were returned by means of election bribery and corrupt election campaigns have very little chance of being re-elected. Nevertheless they wish to cling to power under all circumstances. While fighting among themselves, these corrupt parties have formed a solid united front against the workers and peasants, and all of them voted for the laws for the suppression of the workers and peasants. Under such circumstances the workers and peasants are awakening to the necessity of defending themselves. In addition to their trade unions they have formed the Workers' and Peasants' Party (Rodo Nomin To).

This Workers' and Peasants' Party was preceded some months ago by the Peasants' and Workers' Party (Nomin Rodo To). The latter party, however, had a very short life, namely, three hours. It was suppressed by the Government under article 8 of the Public Peace Police Law. The new Party was formed on March 5, 1926. In the Organisation Committee of the old Party centrist unions were more strongly represented along with Left Wing sympathisers. But in the new party the Right and Centre have an absolute majority.

On March 5 there was held the inauguration conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, at which it was decided:

> (1) The Workers' and Peasants' Party aims at emancipating the proletarian class, both politically, in accordance with the existing conditions of the country.
>
> (2) The Workers' and Peasants' Party aims at reforming by legal means: the existing system regarding land, industry and distribution of wealth.
>
> (3) The Workers' and Peasants' Party aims at supplanting bourgeois parties which represent the interests of the privileged class and reforming fundamentally the present Parliament.

The programme of the Party contain eighteen points, among them being: abolition of all anti-proletarian laws and all laws against colonial people; freedom for Press, speech and organisation, and the right to strike; reduction of armaments and reform of the military system; abolition of customs tariffs and taxes on articles of consumption and of daily necessity, and introduction of high progressive taxation on property; people's diplomacy; establishment of right to cultivate land; minimum wages; prohibition of night work and work in dangerous trades for women and children; revision of factory, mines and seamen's laws, &c.; abolition of all measures restricting women in the selection of their occupation; insurance against unemployment, sickness and accidents, &c.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Party rules provide for individual membership and also collective affiliation. In regard to the membership qualification two proposals were submitted. The first proposal provided for the exclusion of all members of four Left organisations, until the party membership amounted to over 200,000. The second proposal provided for the acceptance of members by local organisations, and in cases of dispute the decision to rest with the Executive. The second proposal was adopted by one vote which constituted a success for the Left Wing.

The Party contribution is sixty sen, of which the half goes to the Central Executive Committee and the other half to the local organisation.

On April 30 there commenced the formation of local groups, which is proceeding with great success. As all the existing parties are deeply compromised by the cases of corruption which have led to the most scandalous scenes in Parliament in the last few days, the new Party finds a favourable soil. The growth of the Workers' and Peasants' Party is frightening the Government and the capitalists, and the Government has therefore already declared in the Press that, if the Communist elements in the Party gain the upper hand, the Government will suppress it.

THE LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

THE COAL CRISIS

Facts from the Samuel Coal Commission

BRITISH IMPERIALISM IN EAST AFRICA

Price 1s. each; post free 1s. 1d.

LABOUR WHITE PAPERS:

No. 19. ENGINEERING WAGES AND PROFITS
No. 20. WHAT THE COAL REPORT MEANS
No. 21. BRITISH CAPITALISM AND GERMAN WORKERS

Price 1d. each; 2s. 9d. for 50; 5s. 6d. for 100, post free.

The L.R.D., 162 Buckingham Palace Rd., London, S.W.1

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOK REVIEWS

THE WORKERS' THEATRE.

The New Spirit in the European Theatre: 1920-1924. By Huntly Carter. Benn. 25s.

The Drama in Adult Education. Adult Education Committee Report No. 6. Stationery Office. 1s.

THE Revolt in the theatre is growing. Dissatisfaction with the old commercial professional theatre is widespread: and in recent years a remarkable number of experimental movements towards a new theatre have developed in England. These movements cover a wide range from liberal philanthropic types to the movement for an independent workers' theatre which is expressed by Rutland Boughton and Huntly Carter. Through all can be discerned a revolt against the suppression of life by existing social conditions and the existing theatre.

But what is to be the character of the new theatre? On this there is no agreement; and discussion rages.

The two books here selected for review may serve as signposts of the new movement in the theatre.

The Government Committee Report is evidence that the State machine has considered the new developing social movement of sufficient importance for a Committe of typical W.E.A. leaders to be set the task of reporting how to guide the movement in safe channels.

The revolutionary outlook of the pioneers in the world of the theatre is expressed in the book of Huntly Carter, whose work is known to THE LABOUR MONTHLY readers. A review of Huntly Carter's book has already appeared in this journal: but this review, in raising certain questions of criticism, did not give any picture of the actual achievement of Huntly Carter's work, nor did it give any positive outlook on the question of the theatre. It may, therefore, still be of value to return to the question.

* * * *

The theatre suffers heavily under the bourgeois regime. Other arts, like painting and poetry, still struggle on under capitalism, though in a very consumptive condition, fighting for air in odd corners and groups, growing more and more detached from life, confined in range and turned in upon the individual, and searching desperately for new sources of inspiration. But the theatre depends for its existence on a great collective life and feeling, and Capitalism kills and stifles all collective life. All that survives is a prostitution of the theatre for corrupt propaganda, of the same type as the capitalist Press, under the control of business magnates for making profits. Nothing else is allowed on a large scale under capitalism. The only alternative is the tiny handful of attempts of coteries of individual intellectuals, divorced from mass life and expressing only their own peculiarities, and starved continually for lack of funds.

The trustification of the theatre, the complete transformation of the theatre into an industry for making dividends, in which human emotions are exploited simply on the basis of what is most cheaply and easily exploitable,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is powerfully exposed (with special attention to the war theatre) by Huntly Carter : as, indeed, it was exposed by Wagner in his day, and the process has gone very much further since. Monster rents, interlocking syndicates (linked up through their directors with allied industries of dressmaking, refreshments, &c.), extravagant productions, star salaries, multiple touring companies, &c., have made the theatre, like the Press, completely a monopoly of big capital, with autocratic control in the hands of a few millionaires. The few older manifestations, which had still some contact with the life of the people—like the old " barnstormers," melodramas, local low comedians and circuses—have vanished more and more completely before the devouring advance of the trust and the standardised production to uniform pattern in every capitalist country in the world.

The abdication of the State in the sphere of the theatre is seen at its most complete in those countries where capitalism is strongest and most anarchic, England and America, where the whole range of drama is left entirely in the hands of private speculators. The State only intervenes as Censor, to prevent the production of social and popular plays which might arouse genuine feeling and endanger class-rule (*e.g.*, Hauptmann's " Weavers," &c.).

The trust theatre aims, not at drawing out the emotion and expression of the audience, but at stupefying, deadening and doping. A gulf is drawn between the illuminated stage and the vast auditorium of atomised individuals, whose only function is to pay for their tickets and sit to the end, with chocolates (at a profit) to keep them quiet. No powerful feeling can be permitted ; everthing must preferably be " light." No living, interesting subjects or issues are permitted ; only the most stale subjects and archaic, reactionary sentiments are permitted, centring round patriotism, the home, the career, romantic love and so forth, and giving place increasingly to dumb spectacle. Like all capitalist institutions, the capitalist theatre is built on the passivity of the masses. Its most developed expression is the music hall, which seeks to bemuse the spectators with a jumble of contradictory sensations in rapid succession.

It is sometimes said that the productions of the trust theatre represent " What the Public Wants " ; and under this impression many artists and would-be innovators of the theatre, instead of coming out into the open to fight, shrink into themselves and their coteries. But this conception is completely false. As in the case of the capitalist Press, the catchword " What the Public Wants " is foul hypocrisy. The heavy capital expenditure, as well as organising facilities, required for large-scale theatrical production under present conditions, rule out any commensurable alternative to what the trust magnates choose to produce. Therefore the pretence of " competition " is humbug. As in all capitalist institutions, the masses have to adapt themselves to what is provided and make the best of it. But this no more means that existing theatrical productions represent " What the Public Wants," than that stuffy, stinking houses, shoddy clothes or adulterated food and drink represent " What the Public Wants." Between a less sumptuous and more sumptuous spectacular production of the same type, the public, not being fools, will choose the more sumptuous. But this does not mean that powerful mass drama, reflecting the real emotions and feelings of the people, and arising

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out of their struggle, would not out-draw in a moment the tedious drivel of the existing stage. Only such production would require the power and resources of the workers' state. If by a miracle any approach to such drama were to appear under existing conditions, it would be banned at once by the capitalist state as incompatible with its existence. The Russian revolutionary film, "The Cruiser Potemkin" (the story of the mutiny in the Black Sea Fleet in 1905), which has been acclaimed by all the art critics—including, incidentally, the critic of the *Morning Post*, as also by the Fascist Douglas Fairbanks—as artistically the finest film yet produced, was shown for a few weeks in Germany and at once drew crowds and queues without precedent. It has now been banned by the German Government, and will certainly not be seen in England.

* * *

The hypocrisy of the capitalist state in relation to the theatre is well illustrated by the Government Committee Report. This Government Committee of amiable philanthropists is unable and afraid to touch the real questions of the theatre. They say :—

> (1) The professional theatre organised on a commercial basis is a subject with which we are unable to deal (p. 200.).
>
> (2) We considered from the first that the question of a national theatre and municipal theatres involved so many difficult issues, and might lead to so much controversy, that we could not attempt to consider them within the limits of this Report (p. 214.).

Thus the two basic questions of the theatre, (1) the trust theatre as it is, and (2) the question of a national theatre are expressly excluded from their view All that remains for them is to enumerate a series of philanthropic and other experiments that are taking place, and patronisingly refer to their "educational value" provided they keep clear of "propaganda" (p. 160.).

The detailed exposure of the trust theatre in Huntly Carter's book is a very valuable piece of work, although he confines himself to the more limited theme of the war and post-war conquest of the theatre by the theatrical "octopi," and their exploitation of cheap emotion for profit, and does not go into the more basic questions of the whole position of the theatre in capitalist society The revolutionary conception which he reaches in the latter portion of his book appears as not yet completely worked out, and his war-time notes of the first part of the book bear the appearance sometimes of having been written at an earlier period, and containing conceptions which he would probably no longer hold. Thus he criticises the war-time theatre from the position that the existing capitalist state (the organ of the trusts) should have saved the theatre from the trusts and taken it over under the Ministry of Propaganda to "ennoble" the "spiritual" purpose of the imperialist war (which was simply a slaughterous, wasteful activity of the trusts that any "ennobling" could only make smell worse). Here it is clear that the conception of a true "national" or social theatre to which he is working, *i.e.*, representing the masses of the nation, is appearing in an early uncritical form. He says :—

> These trusts had acquired size and power through the neglect of the independent bodies to combine and organise in opposition to them, and the English one owing to the neglect of the Government to take over the theatre

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> by special legislation and to organise it in the highest interest of the public in war-time (p. 163).
>
> The nation was not getting the assistance it deserved from its artists by systematically mixing them with every public undertaking, and employing them to appeal to the best instincts by dexterously throwing over many of the home activities a fine flavour of noble purpose. . . This fight was left to one or two bodies of enthusiasts like the "Fight For Right" organisation, that sought to make known the spiritual consequences of the war, and to rouse men and women to take advantage of the spiritual advantages of the struggle. They saw the danger of England sinking so low in the mire of degrading material issues that many years would be required for its recovery (p. 54).

These traces of old confusions are a blemish that weaken the strength of his critical case; nevertheless his exhaustive and documented exposure of the actual workings of the trust theatre during and after the war constitute a strong piece of revolutionary propaganda.

* * * *

In reaction against the Capitalist Theatre, a whole series of schools of Reformers have arisen. These reformers have seen that the situation of the theatre was sick, but did not concern themselves deeply with the social causes of that sickness, nor with the necessary social conditions of a living theatre. They have sought to find a remedy for the theatre from inside the theatre itself. Some have sought to change the subject-matter of plays or the dramatic method, others the production or acting, others the technique, architecture or scenery, others to revive old plays from past ages. There has been the literary school, who have sought to assimilate the drama to literature, introducing the discussion of ideas, social institutions, politics, ethics, philosophy: representatives of this have been Ibsen, Shaw, Strindberg, Brieux, Galsworthy. Others again have sought to find the way forward by innovations in technique, in the structure of the stage and theatre, in scenery and setting, in crowd effects or in mingling of actors and audience: such have been Reinhardt, Gordon Craig, William Poel, Gémier or Marinetti. Others have sought to introduce mysticism, symbolism or religion, as with Yeats, Maeterlinck, Claudel or Toller. Some, like Craig, have grown so hopeless of the existing theatre and the possibility of its reform that they have wanted to destroy it and replace it by marionettes.

But all these schools of Reformers, despite the important results they have achieved in many directions, could not solve the problem of the theatre, because they could not get down to the root of it. They could not affect the main stream of the existing trust theatre, which held society, the public and the acting profession in its grip. Compared with this, all their combined work was no more than a trickle, lacking the conditions of vital relationship of authors, actors and audience which alone makes great drama possible. Most of the new, experimental work had to be performed with great difficulty through small, independent, advanced theatres or play-producing societies, or occasionally in a few European countries with a limited State subsidy or through the capricious support of some rich man. The new movements and societies were always precarious for lack of funds and soon vanishing, or, if successful, usually degenerating in a few years into conventional business con-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cerns. The attempts of the Reformers wilted under the conditions of capitalist society. Both in London and Paris repeated attempts to found and maintain a single modern artistic or experimental theatre have been vain. Occasionally, some isolated new idea or author or play would be taken up by the business managers, but without representing any real change. Thus Shaw, now that his ideas are obsolete in his old plays or conservative and religious in his new, is set up on a pedestal with Shakespeare ; and the more reactionary tendencies of Central European expressionism and symbolism, as with Toller and Capek, are taken up and made a vogue. But the main trend of the business theatre is completely unaffected.

This isolation and impotence of the Reformers reacts harmfully upon their work. Cut off from the mass, they have no genuine independent basis of their own from which to challenge capitalism. Therefore, their work turns in on itself, and becomes confined to the limited range of the individual intellectual, his doubts, fears, hopes, religions, scepticisms and despairs ; the outlook is the narrow outlook of the " educated " classes ; the emotional content weak and watery ; the whole appeal limited. Instead of breaking the limits of the capitalist theatre, the " advanced theatre " becomes more exclusive, esoteric and cut off from the people ; it even seeks to make a virtue of necessity and forms " 300 societies " and the like.

Another group of Reformers, seeing the futility of this and the necessity of living popular contact, tries to break an entirely different path. They seek to make contact with " the people," to " bring the drama to the people." These are the democratisers. These have accomplished a tremendous volume of work, especially in Germany (the " Peoples' Theatres "), but also in England (the " Old Vic.," various civic and repertory theatres, the Arts League of Service, Lena Ashwell Players, &c.). All these testify to the ready audience, once the paralysing influence of the bourgeois stalls is left behind, for Shakespeare and first-class drama. But the aim of the democratisers is in fact limited. They seek to bring a ready-made " theatre " to " the people," and their distinctive character is the aim to bring " good " drama within reach of cheap prices. It is impossible to escape the atmosphere of liberal philanthropy that runs through the greater part of this work. The Government Committee, which is of course in full (verbal) sympathy with the democratisers, so long as there is no danger of drawing on public funds, defines their conception of a " People's Theatre " as—

> to present the great masterpieces of our language at prices which will bring them within reach of the very poor, in fact to found a People's Theatre (p. 26).

Along with this process goes the formation of many types of amateur societies, some of which achieve important pioneering work, but most of which, even where extending to the workers, are dominated by bourgeois liberal, clerical and charitable organisers, and also confine themselves to the aim of bringing " good drama " to " the people."

The new theatre of the future is not likely to arise from the efforts of the democratisers. They have seized on an all-important truth in discovering that a genuine social basis is an essential condition for any new theatre that is to live, but they have not discovered that new social basis, nor could they owing to the limitations from which they start. To them " the people " is still the un-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

differentiated mass under capitalism, and in particular "the very poor," to whom they are the bringers of light and culture; the "community" that is to be the new social basis of the theatre is to consist of the mixture of classes under capitalism. They still start from the essential liberal conception that the mixture of classes under capitalism can provide the basis of a genuine social, spiritual and cultural community. The whole conception is false. Where the classes are mixed under capitalism, there neither unity nor sincerity is possible, but only snobbery, philanthropy and pseudo-culture. The new theatre is not a ready-made good thing to be brought to the people by the harbingers of culture; on the contrary capitalism and its representatives are incapable of producing it, or any theatre, and only try to pass off as their own the products of past ages; the real new theatre can only come from the people, from their struggle and from their power. As Huntly Carter declares:—

> It should be said that although this sort of "Art for the People" rests on good intentions, it is not altogether a good thing. What is needed is "Art and Drama by the People" themselves, and not by deputies (p. 114).

And again—

> We are told that the theatre must regenerate the workers. This is a mistake. The workers are to be liberated to freest expression by the theatre (p. 275).

In other words, the working class is and can be the only social basis and creative force of the new theatre, which shall replace the capitalist theatre. Until the reformers recognise this, they can only run to seed. This is the revolutionary conception of the theatre, which is sharply marked off from that of the reformers.

* * * *

The revolutionary conception of the theatre sees in the social conditions of capitalism the causes of the sickness of the theatre under capitalism. Only the breaking of the bonds which divide men into exploiters and exploited can finally create the community in which the theatre can exist. Only the working-class power can smash the rule of the trust theatre, and mobilise the necessary resources, theatrical equipment, buildings, authors, plays, producers, as well as enlist the co-operation of the masses, so as to make new theatrical creation possible. The workers, by their conditions of life, by their solidarity and common struggle, are drawn together in common consciousness, thus alone realising the first condition of drama. Already the efforts of groups of workers towards theatrical expression, under however limited conditions, are the first nucleus of the future workers' theatre.

Huntly Carter, who reviews with very great wealth of detail and interest the work of the reformers in the European theatre during and since the war, finally adopts without hesitation the revolutionary view that the only force which can conquer the capitalist theatre and create a new theatre is the working class. This view is strongly reinforced by the experience of the Russian Workers' Revolution, which has not only carried forward theatrical development with unparalleled energy, extensiveness and freshness, but has also drawn in workers and peasants all over the country into the first beginnings of a mass theatrical movement. The account of these developments is one of the most interesting sections of the book.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At the same time he brings into review the recent developments that have taken place in England towards a " Labour " theatre. These are still in the majority of cases very far from any approach to a real working-class theatre. While recognising the value of every genuine effort and experiment, he criticises the policy pursued by such bodies as the I.L.P. or London Labour Drama Association, which do not attempt to base themselve on working-class independence, but in practice follow the liberal line of the Democratisers. He says :—

> The workers themselves should be the interpreters of this movement. They should be left free as far as possible to dig out of themselves forms of art and drama which might serve the useful purpose of revitalising existing forms. But the present organisers of the workers' theatre movement do not seem to appreciate this point. Apparently, the I.L.P. are anxious to attract all comers and to imitate any methods. They seek to have headquarters in London, to federate with any and every drama society and music choir, and to follow in the footsteps of middle-class organisations (p. 274).

And on the question of outlook he says :—

> The academic and conventional people of the theatre re-dream the old dream of the regeneration of the theatre. There may be something good in this. They form ever-widening groups, community and other. But it must be recognised that they seek inspiration from an exhausted subject and technique. It is true that the war has given them a consciousness of democracy ; it has introduced them to a new theory of morals—namely, the unrighteousness of war—and it has touched them with realism or a sense of life values. Still, on the whole they are not on the main path of the revolution of the theatre. They are on the path of its evolution along conventional lines (p. 278).

The revolutionary conception which Huntly Carter reaches in the last portion of his book is naturally no more than a first approach to the question. Much remains to be filled in, and the transition to a revolutionary outlook is not yet complete, as many forms of expression betray. In particular, the question of the necessary path of development to the workers' theatre is hardly considered. He makes no distinction between what can be done in the present period, and what can only be done after the conquest of power, thus leaving the suggestion that the whole development to a workers' theatre might take place under capitalism by a sudden outburst of working-class theatrical effort. Such a suggestion would be not only false, but dangerous in the extreme, because it would at once make for a separation of the workers' theatre movement into a dillettante movement apart from the revolutionary struggle. It is obvious that the full development to a workers' theatre can only take place after the conquest of power, because only then are the objective conditions—control of economic resources—available, and the social consciousness of the workers widely awakened. But this does not mean that important first beginnings cannot be made in the present period, which would already have great value in assisting the struggle for power.

The problems of the present period, as well as many questions arising in connection with the conception of a workers' theatre, need attention in a future work. The groups that are already forming require assistance, both theoretical and practical. One of the most urgent questions is the question of repertoire. The existing so-called " advanced " plays are nearly all unusable

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from a working-class point of view, and the new plays have not yet come, nor will they be likely to come for some time, as they can only arise, not individually, but from the development of the workers' theatre itself. The groups will have in the first place to develop their own plays from the stories of the workers' struggle, and particularly from vivid episodes in English working-class history or from current events. Fine sketches could already be developed from the stories of Chartism. Or the present miners' struggle could be presented episodically with powerful effect. In the same way sketches could be developed of the Empire, the coming of the exploiters, the struggle for freedom, thus arousing a living sense of international solidarity in all participating.

Again, there are questions of production, of stage, of scenery, of relations of actors to the audience, etc. Huntly Carter touches on many of the developments that are taking place in these directions, but does not bring his own view to bear on them in the majority of cases, being content to describe, without attempting to analyse them from a revolutionory standpoint. Here also is ground for future work for him and others interested to do.

All these are questions for subsequent working out. What is achieved in the present book is, in the first place, a survey of modern tendencies in the theatre, and in the second place, on the basis of this, the positive enunciation of the principle of a workers' theatre. On these lines, it is to be hoped that Huntly Carter and many others will carry out further work. For what is certain is that the workers' theatre has a future before it which will leave the existing capitalist theatre a mocked-at memory of the past, and that the working class and the working class alone can save the theatre.

R. P. D.

THE INDIAN PEASANT THROUGH OFFICIAL SPECTACLES

The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt. By Malcolm Lyall Darling, I.C.S. (Oxford University Press, 1925.)

THE peasant question in India, the problems bound up with the economic exploitation of the millions of agricultural workers and peasants that form the majority of the population of Great Britain's most profitable colony, will be of decisive importance in the near future. As in Russia, so in India, the last word will rest with the peasants. Naturally, therefore, one turns eagerly to the voluminous literature of British rule in India to learn something of the life of the peasant, of his economic position and social and political aspirations and of the trend of development during the last half century.

The result is a scanty harvest, but an illuminating revelation of British interests in India. The peasant practically does not come into the picture at all. Land revenue, famine, the economics of agriculture and the procedure of administration form the chief concerns of British officialdom, only a minute handful of books and most of fairly recent date, like Dr. Mann's study of life and labour in a Deccan village, are devoted to the questions we have mentioned. Among these the book here under review will rank as one of the foremost.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Superficially the book is extremely attractive. Though primarily a study of agricultural debt, it deals also with the life of the peasant. It has been compiled with great thoroughness in the collection of data. At the same time it is written in a very attractive style, and it is full of sidelights on village life. As the ex-Governor of the Punjab remarks in the preface, the Punjab peasant is a "fascinating subject."

Closer examination, however, reveals the limitations of even the most enlightened of bureaucrats. The Government official cannot transcend the limits of officialdom. Even the view of the peasant is from the outside and the description of the different races savours of the painstaking catalogue of a natural historian faced with new genera and species. What the peasant thinks is clearly not evidence, and it would never be guessed from this book that the Amritsar massacre took place in the Punjab, or that the Punjab was the centre of the Akali movement and of political and religious upheaval. There are actually two mentions of the Akali movement, one of which is interesting as suggesting its economic basis, the other referring to it as a "political danger of prosperity."

As a matter of fact in its main thesis the book can only be condemned as worthless and a typical example of either unconscious or deeply designed Government propaganda. The central thesis is to exhibit the blessings of British government, and to prove that improvidence and debt is the cause of Indian poverty and not landlordism or Government exploitation.

This attitude is expressed with all the benevolent insolence of the official. Thus we read :—

> As in the Sungli villages, there was not a word of gratitude to Government. On the contrary, "Look how Government has scored," they said, "the district used to pay one lakh of land revenue and now it pays a score." . . . The attitude is characteristic of the times and recalls the age at which the adolescent boy is tempted to deny all obligation to his parents."

A prominent part of the book is taken up with fervent praise of the benefits introduced by the Government canal irrigation schemes which have been the basis for the development of the three "canal colonies." The author has to admit, however, that "there was nothing new in the idea of irrigation by canal. The Mughals had done it in the Southern Punjab 300 years before." Still he delights to draw the contrast between the West Punjab, where "life is the immemorial life of India, primitive, isolated and fatalistic," and the canal colonies where—

> it is the new life brought in by the Pax Britannica, prosperous, progressive and modern.

Some explanation of this admiration may be found in the following statement :—

> In 1921-22, a normal year, a net profit of Rs. 169 lakhs or over £1,000,000 was made by Government upon the canals serving the three major colonies and representing a dividend of 22 per cent. upon the capital outlay." (P. 131.)

It is not unwarrantable to see in this also an explanation of the exaggerated importance ascribed to debt. The idea of the British Government is to capture the peasant from the clutches of the moneylender so that its own exploitation may be more efficiently conducted. Mr. Darling's especial "guru" is Malthus,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and he quotes him with relish from beginning to end of the book. In one place, in a footnote, he himself admits that :—

> Since 1868 population has increased by 22 per cent. and cultivation by 50 per cent. (P. 232.)

Yet, true to officialdom, he never ceases to stress that *over-population* is the cause of Indian poverty. He quotes Malthus' words and declares, "the root cause of India's poverty could hardly be better expressed." He says, again :—

> In spite of want population multiplies. In Europe we may talk of the survival of the fittest (though modern legislation is doing its best to prove it a lie), but in India it is time to speak of the survival of the least unfit. And so we arrive at the secret of India's poverty, over-population, improvidence and disease.

In his preface his admission of the role of Government apologist is equally clear. "If this book establishes anything," he says, "it is that such poverty as exists in the Punjab has little to do with the activities of Government." Hence a summary rejection of the idea that any part is played by the burden of land revenue (which, by the way, amounts to 47 million rupees per annum from a population of 20 millions, a higher amount per head than in any other province where the Zamindari system of land tenure prevails. Bengal with more than twice the population pays only 29 million rupees in land revenue). Hence also entire neglect of any study of landlordism and complete concentration on the evils of borrowing. It rather suggests going into a slum area in Great Britain and ascribing the poverty of the people to their visits to the pawnbroker. It may not be out of place to notice also that the peasants are mainly Muslims, while the moneylenders are Hindus, and to foment this difference while diverting attention from the landlords and the Government would not be against the traditions of British rule.

One cannot escape the conclusion that even the eulogy of co-operation is a piece with the rest of the book. The Government co-operative banks are being run with the best of philanthropic intentions, like all the actions of the British Government in India, but here again the motive behind is exploitation of the prosperous Punjab for the benefit of the Government instead of the moneylender. Further, the Punjab is a valuable reservoir of men for the Indian army and of food materials for abroad and hence the wish to see it scientifically developed. It only remains to add one little sidelight on agricultural wages.

> In the Western Punjab we saw that Rs. 5 a month was all that a man could expect. Here, and in the colony generally, he gets twice that amount and good clothing as well." (P. 159.)

Five rupees is less than seven and sixpence. What a vista of super-profits would be opened up if only all India could be cultivated by thrifty agricultural labourers hired at 15s. a month !

C.P.D.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EXPERIENCE

Experience, knowledge, well-chosen plant, light airy buildings, good organisation and dispatch service, all contribute to the production of two dozen or so weekly and monthly journals, turned out in their millions of copies by us.

ADD YOURS, AND SECURE REAL SERVICE

In your first communication to us please mention "The Labour Monthly."

LONDON

Caledonian Press Ltd.

TRADE UNION IN ALL DEPARTMENTS

W. FRANCIS MOSS, *Managing Director*

74 Swinton Street, Gray's Inn Road
London, W.C. 1

Telegrams: Edcalopres, Kincros, London
Telephone: Museum 1311
Museum 7777

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Published by the proprietors
the Trinity Trust
162 *Buckingham*
Palace Road
*S.W.***1.**

and Printed by the London Caledonian Press Ltd.
74 *Swinton Street, Gray's Inn Road*
*W.C.***1**

W12456

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED